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THE ANTIQUARY'S BOOKS

GENERAL EDITOR: J. CHARLES COX, LL.D., F.S.A.

SHRINES OF BRITISH SAINTS

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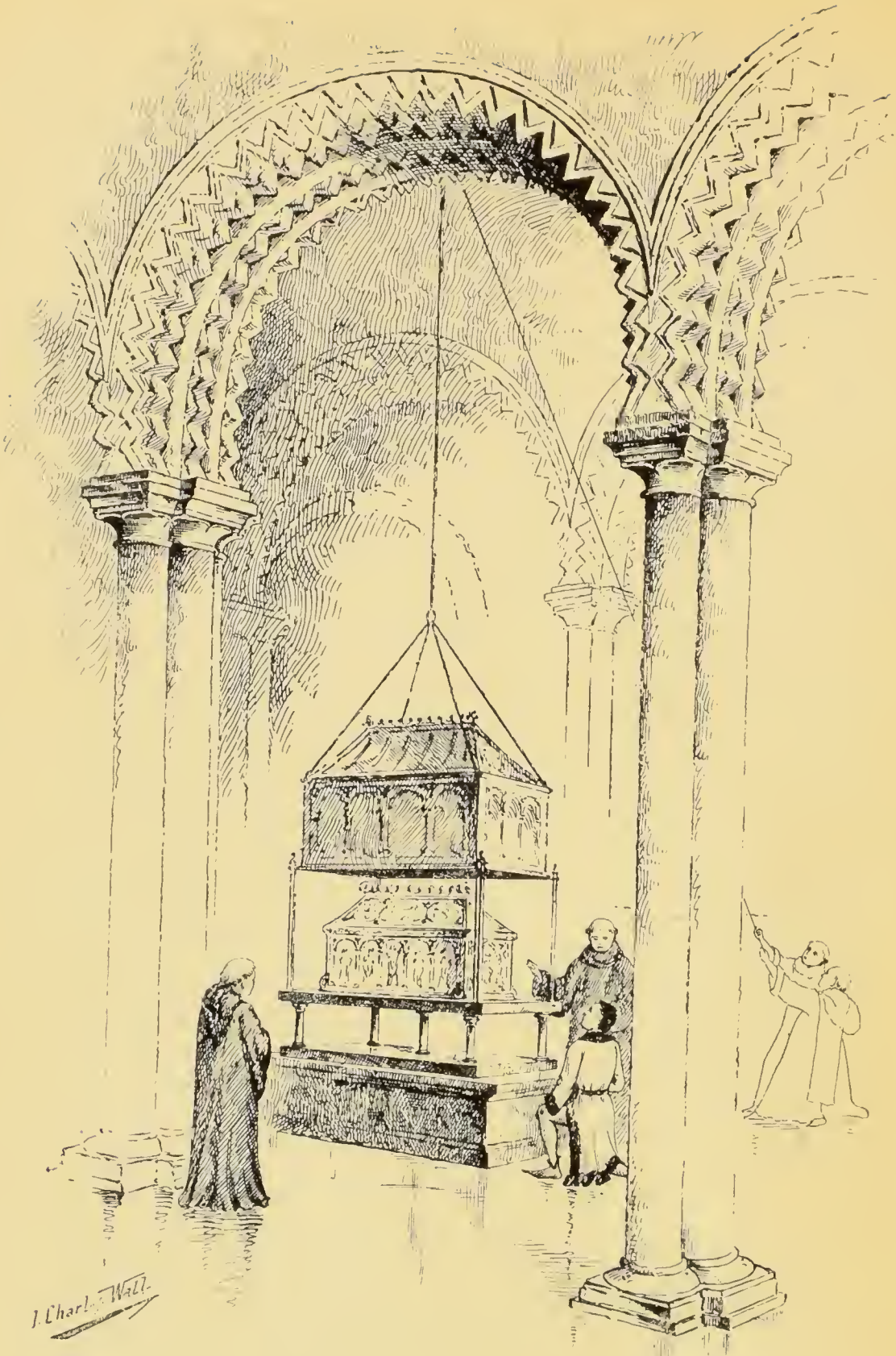

CONJECTURAL RESTORATION OF ST. BEDE'S SHRINE

SHRINES OF BRITISH SAINTS

SHRINES OF BRITISH SAINTS

BY

J. CHARLES WALL

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS

METHUEN & CO.
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.
LONDON

8652A

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First Published in 1905

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INTRODUCTION

LONG years since, ere the fenlands were drained or the forests of England were so denuded of their majestic wealth of timber and foliage that they became mere plantations, when all locomotion was by foot, horse, or coracle, men and women, fired by divine love, undeterred by the difficulties of travel or the danger of preying wolves, carried the gospel news through the weird loneliness of vast solitudes to the tribes settled in the wildest recesses of the country.

Those were days of mystic loveliness and poetical beauty, when the Isle of Avallon was regarded as the abode of the spirits of the blest, when the Isle of Ely was held to be miraculously enshrouded and watergirt for the protection of purity.

Simple as those times may appear, through the knowledge of the present age, great deeds were done. Mythical as many of the stories are now held, there can be no considerable astonishment that those deeds, wondrous in themselves, should be enhanced by accumulative legendary lore and clothed in a robe of romance.

Other of these holy ones, instead of going into the little world of their period, drew their disciples out of that world and her temptations into these solitudes for the development of greater spirituality. Others, again, not deeming it faithful in themselves to labour only 'mid

those within their country's pale, went forth across the seas. Never since those early days have Britons been so fervently imbued with missionary zeal—considering the facilities for such work, the population, and standard of learning. In the countries of Western Europe they worked and they died, and there Latins and Teutons revere the memories of British saints, while in England itself they are forgotten.

No wonder that England and Ireland alike were called the "Island of Saints," and that the small Isle of Bardsey, near Cardigan Bay, received the same honourable distinction independently of the mother isle, for, although but two miles and a half in length by one and a half in breadth, it is said that the bodies of twenty thousand saints were there laid in peace.

Glastonbury Abbey was called the Second Rome on account of the number of saints who were buried within its precincts. At St. Augustine's, Canterbury, it was said that every footstep trod upon the grave of a saint; and William of Malmesbury declares that every corner of that monastery was filled with the bodies of saints of great name and merit, any one of which would be of itself sufficient to irradiate all England.

The numerous Holy Isles—such as Iona, which being Anglicised means the Blessed Isle; Holyhead, and nearly all the parishes with the same prefix in the British Isles, in its Latin, Celtic, or English form—commemorate the presence of the grave or shrine of a saint.

Although nearly the whole of the visible shrines in Britain have been totally destroyed, the entire land is a shrine, its soil is permeated with the dust of her saints; but, alas! the sins of her children arrest the continued application of the name "The Isle of Saints."

Saturated as the land is with saintly remains, it had, until the sixteenth century, special centres of devotion associated with those more specially honoured, such as St. Edward at Westminster, St. Cuthbert at Durham, and St. Thomas at Canterbury, and others who gave their names to the towns that rose around their shrines, as St. Alban, St. Edmund, and St. David.

The present work is an attempt to picture the various classes of shrines which were raised in Great Britain to honour the memory and the relics of her saints, to describe the construction of the greater shrines, to comprehend the riches of art bestowed upon them, and to expose the dominating reason for their destruction. These former structures should be better known, some for the sake of the saint, others for the sake of the shrine ; others, again, reveal to us some of the customs of our forefathers, or how they became the means of swaying human passions. Raised to stimulate devotion, they occasionally stirred envy and covetousness, and tended to provoke even more grievous sins.

The numerous legends which, in the minds of the simple, enfolded many of the shrines in palls of wondrous mystery, and thereby begot greater awe and reverence in the person of the pilgrim, have not been entirely overlooked, many of them being deeply interesting, even if mainly fabulous.

These pages do not, however, embrace a scheme of tabulating the numberless shrines which are known to have existed, nor the enumerating the relics of either British or foreign saints which were preserved in the churches of this empire. Britain's saints, though some were of foreign nationality ; Britain's saints, although many British born, carried their missionary work to

foreign fields and were there laid to rest, or raised to honour in shrines still held dear by French and Breton, Flemish and German, Swiss, Italian, and Norseman.

To the kindly help of those who are yet the custodians of certain shrines I am deeply indebted, and gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the Very Rev. G. W. Kitchin, who at Durham watches over the relics of the Venerable Bede, St. Cuthbert, and St. Oswald; the Rev. Charles Druitt, vicar of Whitchurch Canonicorum, in whose church the remains of St. Candida lie enshrined; and the Rev. Canon Columb, the custodian of the mutilated yet beautiful reliquary of St. Manchán. To the Rev. Dr. Cox, the general editor of this series, I owe many valuable suggestions, especially for his help in the account of St. Alkmund, which, but for his aid, I should probably have overlooked. My gratitude also goes forth to Mr. H. S. King for his invaluable aid in kindly reading these sheets for the press.

J. C. W.

SHRINES OF BRITISH SAINTS

CHAPTER I

GENERAL REMARKS ON SHRINES

THE saints' shrines in England were famous throughout Christendom; for the people of this land sacrificed of their substance to honour their saints, whose virtues shone pre-eminently throughout the whole Christian world, and attracted the devotion of countless pilgrims from abroad, in addition to those within her own borders.

Not only in Great Britain, but in those provinces in Europe to which many of our sainted missionaries carried the gospel news, shrines were erected in their honour, and were accounted as the most precious of treasures by the people they had converted.

Yet while the shrines in foreign countries still draw the faithful to their precincts, those in England are debased; in vain we look for the monuments of the sanctified, and arduous search is necessary to trace the smallest remains.

This is not to be attributed solely to the reforming wave which swept over this country in the sixteenth century, but chiefly to the avaricious and jealous king who at that time ruled with Tudor autocracy. The greed of Henry VIII. caused him to covet the riches of the accumulated offerings of centuries; and his despotic disposition could not brook that others—even though in Paradise—should in any way

share the honour and reverence which he considered due only to his own august person. It was no question of religion with him which made him withhold the donations he once lavished on shrines and prompted him to commit the most overwhelming system of sacrilege.

It was truly a Reign of Terror for the "religious," either in the technical or common sense, and the destruction, both moral and structural, was so vast that when the nation could again breathe without fear of the gibbet, true religion was not a conspicuous virtue in the breasts of her children. A compulsory hypocrisy forced upon them by a hypocritical tyrant had become too ingrained to be lightly cast away. And if the spirit, or will, survived to restore the desecrated shrines, in however humble a manner, the very essence had gone, the relics were in most cases irrecoverably lost. They had been burnt, scattered, and defiled — as it were, again martyred as witnesses for their Lord ; for in those relics were enshrined the principles which actuated the saints in life, of Christian charity and humility, and of boldness in the defence of those things which were God's. Yet Cæsar coveted all ; he was his own god, and as the Roman Emperors of old deified their predecessors, and themselves, so Henry the Eighth thrust himself before the nation as the only legitimate being to receive the offering of the incense of homage.

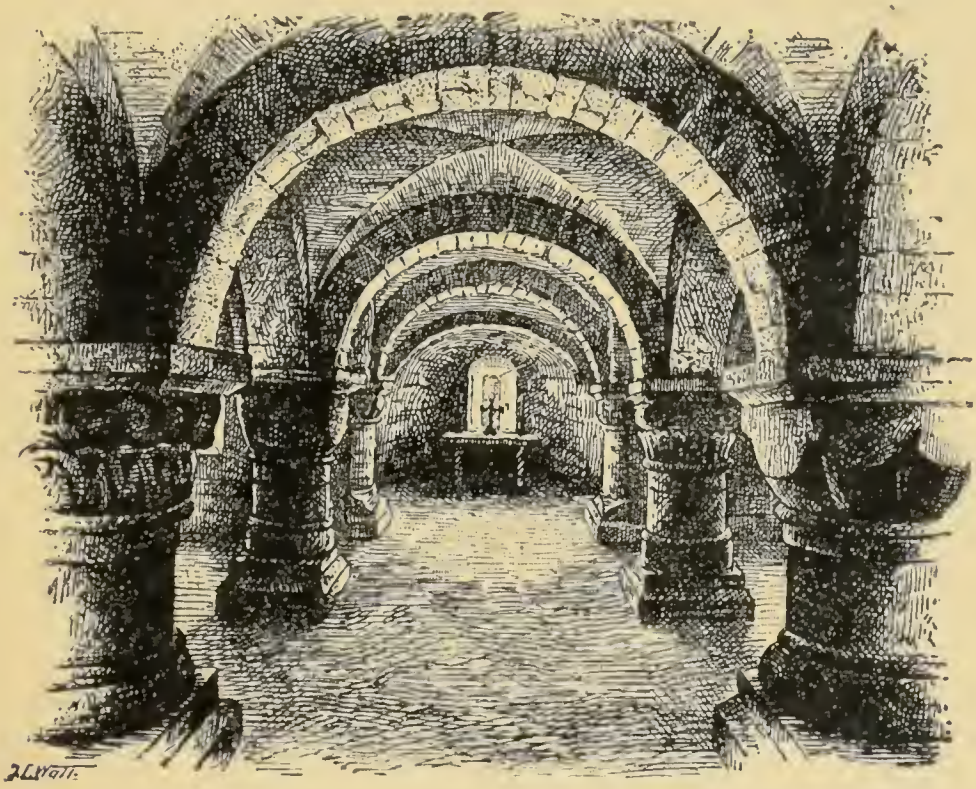
In the following pages are occasional quotations from the King's State papers, and in them the real motives by which he was prompted in his *reforms* are more clearly apparent than can be conveyed by modern pen. The principal instruction is for the spoils to be conveyed to the royal treasury in the Tower of London.

A shrine is literally a place or receptacle for the preservation of some precious object, and in Christian countries is applied to the tomb or coffer containing the relics of a saint.

The subject of relics cannot be considered here, except so far as it affects the form and decoration of the shrine and the position they occupied in the sanctuary.

The practice of building Christian altars over the relics of martyrs obtained from the Book of the Apocalypse: "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held."

The earliest examples of this use of martyrs' tombs



CRYPT OF ST. CEDD, LASTINGHAM

are probably those of the Catacombs, and although it cannot be proven that they were thus used during the period of persecution, it is certain that as early as the opening of the fifth century the Church of Africa erected altars over the bodies of the martyrs, not only in the churches, but by the roadside or in fields,[1] wherever the saint had suffered and been buried. Such altars became the shrines of those saints, and the custom yet pertains to Western Christendom

[1] Canon 83, *Codex Can. Eccl. Afric.* A.D. 419, in Brun's *Canones*, i. 176.

of placing relics in a cavity of the altar slab beneath the Holy Stone, or Seal. The same idea prevails where a casket containing relics is placed within an open altar, as is the case in the ancient church of St. Etheldreda in Ely Place, London, formerly the chapel of the town house of the bishops of Ely; or where the tomb of a saint is in a *confessio*, or crypt beneath the high altar of the church above, as the tomb of the Apostles in St. Peter's, Rome, or the crypt of St. Cedd at Lastingham, Yorkshire.

In allusion to this custom of building over the graves of martyrs St. Chrysostom writes:—

> "One might see whole cities running to the monuments of martyrs," and "apostles in their death were more honourable than the greatest kings upon earth; for even at Rome, the royal city, emperors and consuls and generals left all and ran to the sepulchres of the fisherman and tent-maker."

The shrine or chapel thus built was early known as a *martyry*.[1]

The tombs, or shrines, of those saints which were not covered by an altar ofttimes assumed lofty proportions, and as art increased they became things of great beauty, being built of marble and alabaster, decorated by the most skilled sculptors. On some of these structural shrines were placed coffers containing the relics, and in a thirteenth-century restoration of the shrine of St. Egwin at Evesham Abbey the stone shrine on which the coffer was exalted is called *a throne*.[2]

The portable coffer—a coffin or smaller chest—was called a *feretrum*, or bier, capable of being borne in procession. It contained either the whole body of the saint, as was the case with St. Cuthbert and St. Edward the Confessor, or part of the relics, as in the case of

[1] Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451, Canon vi.
[2] Dugdale's *Monasticon*, vol. ii.

FOOT SHRINE

SWISS WORK, DATED 1470

In the possession of Mr. Hollingworth Magniac

St. Thomas of Canterbury, and many another. The smaller feretories were used when, in a translation of the relics, the body was found to have perished and the bones only were preserved, which would naturally occupy only a small compass. Another reason for the use of a small feretory was occasioned by the division of relics. This division could easily be effected with dry bones, which were frequently distributed among various religious houses; but it was also done by the severance of a limb or member from the otherwise perfect body. The Eastern Church seems to have been the first to dismember bodies for this purpose. Such an action, at once revolting and sacrilegious, encouraged the coveting and thieving of relics, and that trafficking in fragments of saints, which led to much scandal during the Middle Ages.

The magnificence of many of the feretories may be gathered from the description of some of those which formerly enriched the churches in England, the shrines themselves having been long since transformed into coin for the pleasures of a king. Those of the greatest renown will be described in their respective places, but many of the smaller, which were preserved in the treasuries or around the principal shrine, must have been of great beauty, and the description of one of the many kept at Lincoln indicates the art which was lavished upon them :—

"Item, one feretory of silver and gilt standing upon four pillars with one plane foot with one steeple in the height of the covering ornate with red stones and a round berall in the other end containing the finger of St. Katherine in a long purse ornate with pearls."

The dismemberment of bodies led to the making of other forms of shrines, more properly called reliquaries, taking the form of that member of the body a piece of which it enclosed—a bust, a head, an arm, or a foot,

made in goldsmith's work, which contained a fragment of the corresponding part of the saint's body.

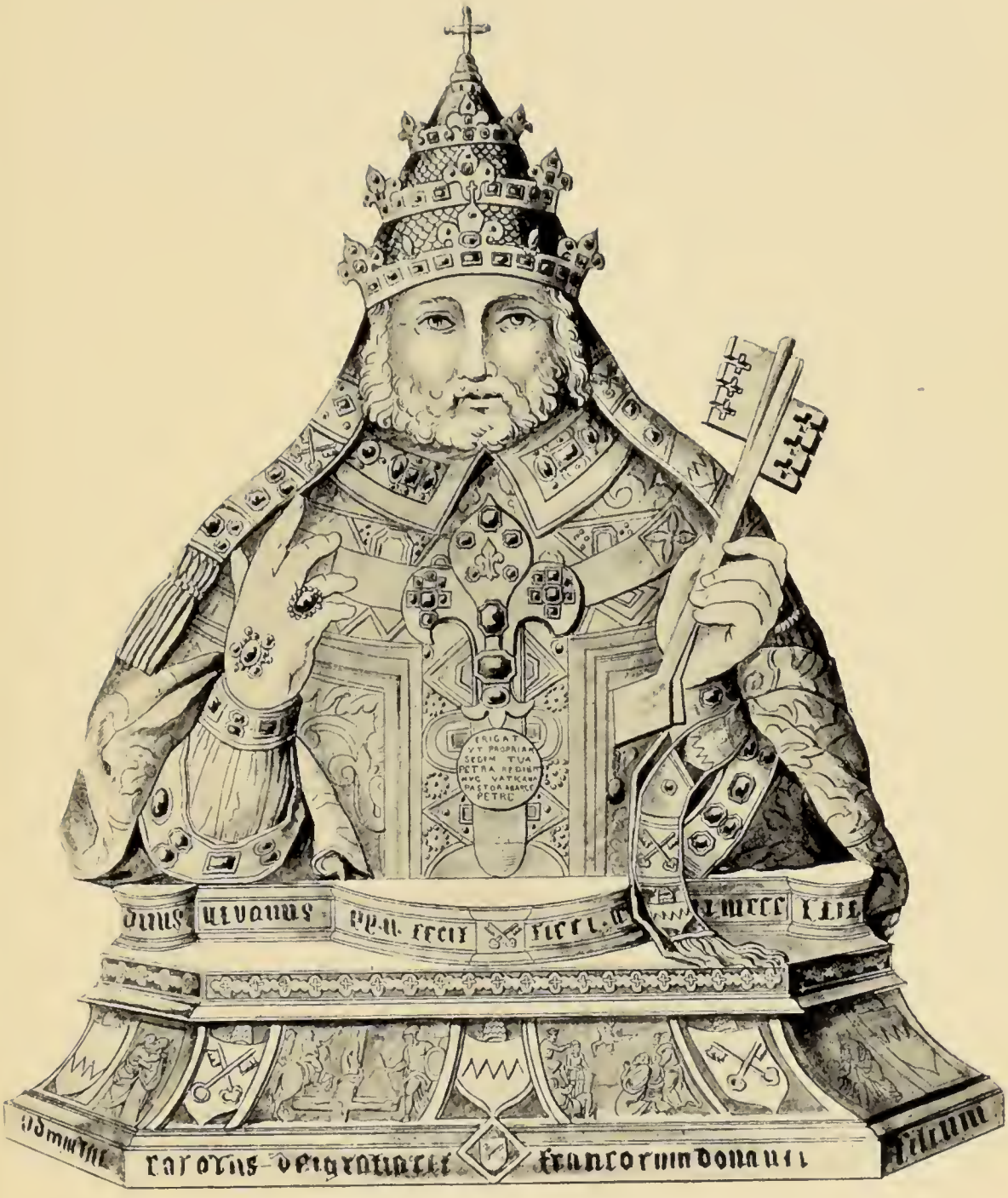
When it took the form of a head it was frequently called a *chef*. The earliest known *head* is of St. Candidus in the church of St. Maurice, in the Valais; this is of the ninth or tenth century. That of St. Eustace, of the eleventh century, in the British Museum, is of wood overlaid with silver, partly gilt. Around the head is a bandeau, or fillet, set with paste and stones, among them being two antique gems. The neck is mortised into a square plinth, the sides of which are ornamented with an arcade in relief, and beneath the arches are small effigies of the Apostles in embossed silver. It was originally in the treasury of Basle Cathedral, and was sold with the rest of the church property in 1834.

Another *chef* in the South Kensington Museum is of a bishop—bearded and venerable. Within the forehead is set an *adularia* or moonstone covering the letters S+I, indicative of St. Januarius, Bishop of Benevento, whose relics it once held. It is of the sixteenth century, and was obtained from the monastery of St. Gall.

At Chichester is a chapel of St. Richard's Head, in which the *chef* was kept, and at Canterbury the crown of St. Thomas was contained in a similar reliquary which, from the wealth of precious metal and jewels, came to be called the "Golden Head."

Lincoln Cathedral had a wonderful collection of various reliquaries, according to the inventories still extant in the muniment room. Among them was a head of silver gilt standing upon a foot of copper gilt, having a garland with stones of divers colours, which contained relics of the eleven thousand virgin companions of St. Ursula; but this class of shrine which existed in England has entirely perished.

The shrine of St. Osyth's arm at St. Paul's was set



THE *CHEF* OR HEAD SHRINE OF ST. PETER

IN THE CHURCH OF S. JOHN LATERAN, ROME

with twenty-two precious stones, in addition to enamels and pearls. An arm of St. Mellitus was given by the monks of St. Augustine's, Canterbury, to Bishop Eustace of London—the successor in the saint's own see—which was shrined in a reliquary of this form made of silver, set with sixteen crystals, four greater and six smaller stones. The same cathedral of St. Paul also possessed an arm of St. Oswald covered with silver plates, and a rib

HEAD RELIQUARY OF ST. EUSTACE
British Museum

of St. Richard in a silver-gilt case held up by two angels. The shrine of St. Lachtin's arm which was preserved in St. Lachtin's Church, Donoughmore, County Cork, is now in the museum of the Royal Irish Academy. This is of native workmanship, about the early part of the twelfth century, made in light bronze. The hand, which is riveted to the arm at the wrist, has the nails, the palm, the back, and around the wrist, inlaid with silver. The upper end of the arm is also ornamented with silver and a

row of bluish-grey stones resembling the chalcedony, and there are indications of a second row of stones above. Riveted across the centre of the arm is a broad band with knots in relief, and down the arm are four flat narrow fillets at equal distances, inscribed in Irish minuscules :—

1. OR DO MAELSECHNAILL UCELLACHAIN DO ARDRIG . . . IGNI IN CUMTACHS
   (Pray for Maelsechnaill descendant of Cellachan . . . who made this reliquary.)
2. DO CHORMAC MAC MEIC CARTHAIGI DO RIG DAMNU MUMAN DO RATHAE . . . D . . . D
   (Pray for Cormac son of MacCarthaig, namely, for the Crown Prince of Munster . . .)
3. OR DO TADG MAC ME . . . THIGI DO RIG . . .
   (Pray for Tadg son of . . . King . . .)
4. OR DO DIARMAIT MAC MEIC DENISC DO COMARBA DIDOM
   (Pray for Diarmait son of MacDenisc, for the successor of . . .)

Nearly the whole of the arm, the silver parts as well as those of bronze, is ornamented with engraved knots and scroll-work ; and at the upper part between the aforementioned rows of stones are figures of animals. The root of the arm was fastened by a circular cap, inlaid with silver, the centre having mosaic work surrounded by silver filigree.

The arm here illustrated is in the South Kensington Museum ; it is of Italian workmanship, carved in wood, covered in gesso and partly gilt. It is a good example of the usual form. Others in the same museum from Spain are long and straight ; most of them have the hand opened in benediction, though some are entirely closed in the same way as St. Lachtin's.

The Fiocail Phadraig, or shrine of St. Patrick's tooth—fourteenth century—is inscribed in Lombardic capitals "Corp Naomh," the Holy Body. It has small plates

SHRINE OF ST. LACHTIN'S ARM

MUSEUM OF THE ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY

with filigree whorls of twisted wire fastened on the spaces between the figures representing the Crucifixion.

A finger shrine, which was in the possession of the Hon. Robert Curzon, is of the form and size of a finger. It is of silver gilt, and stands erect on an embattled base, around which is inscribed "—OS ✠ DIGITVS : S : THEODERI." The finger-bone is seen through openings pierced like little windows, the extremity of the bone being gilt. The base rests on three feet formed of little branches. The entire height is four inches.

A finger-bone of St. Oswald, preserved in an ivory pyx, was among the shrines of St. Paul's Cathedral, and in the cathedral of St. Swithun at Winchester was a reliquary of St. Philip's foot, covered with plate of gold and decorated with precious stones.

RELIQUARY ARM: ITALIAN
Victoria and Albert Museum

This description of reliquary has led in recent times to many undeserved charges of fraud. That there should be numerous arms or heads of the same saint offers the opportunity for the uninitiated to make such charges, for which occasionally there may be some foundation; but when it is understood than an "arm of St. Oswald" or a "head of St. Thomas" has from long custom been applied to a reliquary fashioned to that form, and containing, it may be, the merest fragment of a bone from that part of a saint's body, and with no fraudulent intent called "the arm" or "the head" of Saint So-and-so, there need be no surprise at a saint possessing arms or heads in many different localities.

The usual form of Celtic reliquary, at one time so numerous in Ireland, is a quadrangular metal box with the sides inclined inwards and with a cover like a gabled roof, under which shape the Temple of Jerusalem is represented in the Book of Kells. These coffers were decorated with enamelling and chasing, exhibiting a great degree of art, barbaric perhaps, but in a spirit unsurpassed in later times.

Dr. Petrie concludes from the number of references to shrines in the Irish annals that, previously to the irruption of the Northmen in the eighth and ninth centuries, there were few, if any, of the distinguished churches in Ireland which were not possessed of costly shrines. At the same time it must be borne in mind that in Ireland these were not always made to contain the corporeal relics of saints, but were made for the preservation of such relics of holy people as their bells, books of the gospels, and things of personal use, such as the shoe of St. Bridget.

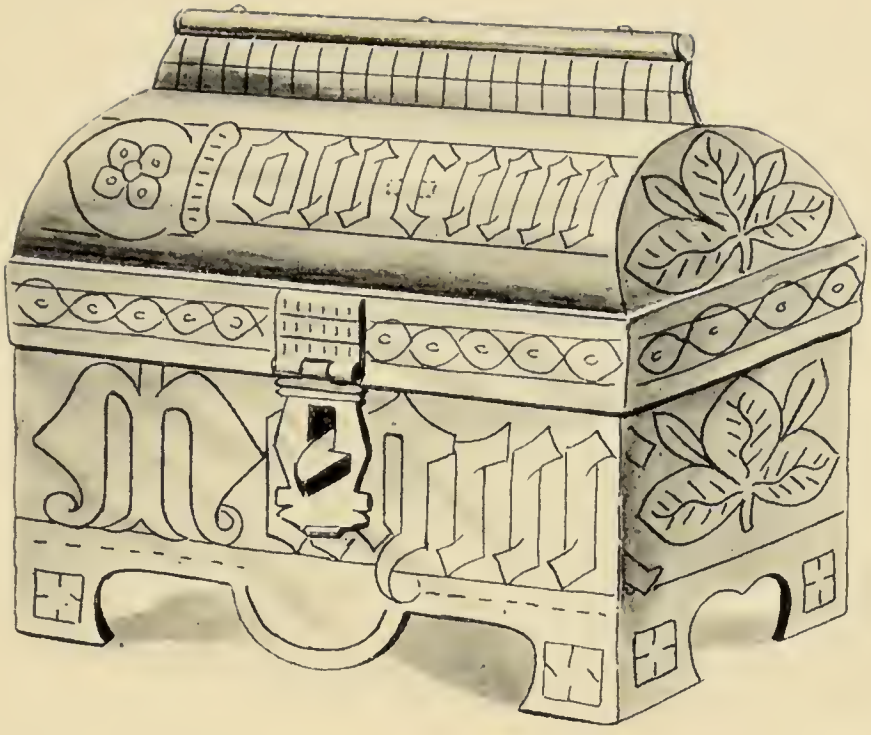
The museums of Denmark contain many spoils of Celtic workmanship which were seized by the Danish raiders who were for ages the scourge of our coasts.

A few of these Celtic shrines are happily left to us—the Breac Moedog, or shrine of St. Moedoc of Ferns (see page 81); and of St. Manchan in the chapel of Boher, Lemanaghan, King's County (page 84). One which was found in the river Shannon is now in the museum of antiquities in Edinburgh; another is preserved at Monymusk House in Aberdeenshire; and another in the Royal Irish Academy.

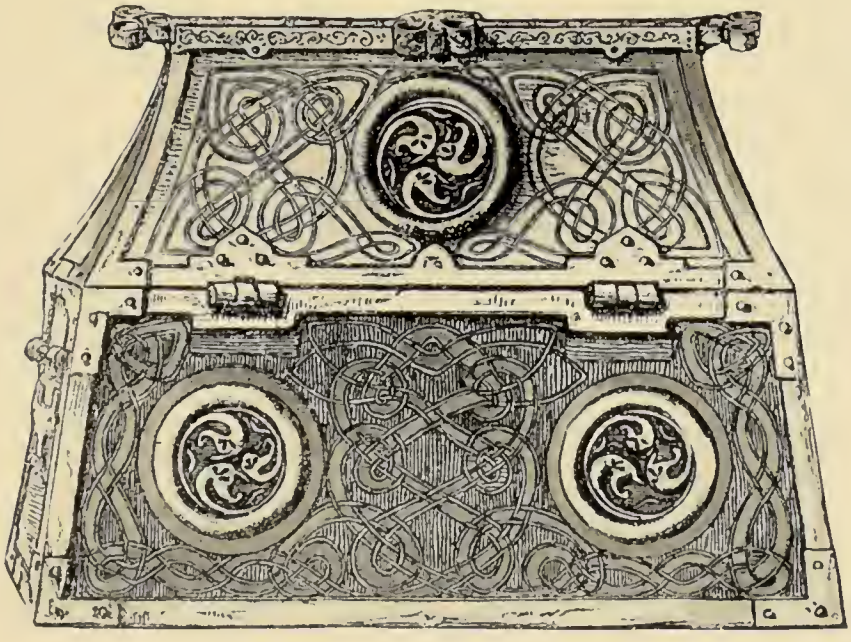
An Irish reliquary found in Norway, and now in the museum at Copenhagen, is inscribed in runes.

Similar little caskets of brass, of English make, may be seen in the English museums, but the workmanship is much inferior to those of Ireland.

Coffers of similar form and beautifully decorated with Limoges enamels were at one time fairly common



ENGLISH RELIQUARY OF LATTEN



RELIQUARY IN THE MUSEUM AT COPENHAGEN

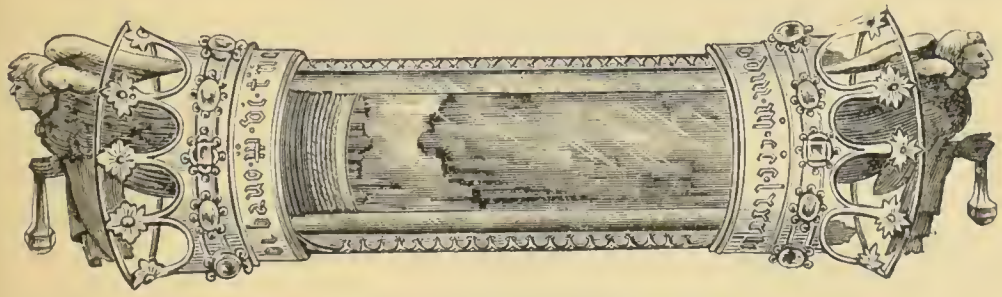
6¼ INCHES IN LENGTH

From Dr. Anderson's "Scotland in Early Christian Times"

throughout England; examples still exist at Hereford and in the museum of the Society of Antiquaries. These are of Romanesque character; but in the Middle Ages reliquaries assumed architectural forms; imitations of churches in miniature, which old inventories reveal, were numerous throughout this country. All English examples, however, of this character seem to be totally lost. But it was the earlier form of casket shrine which was generally used—though greatly elaborated—in the feretories of the great continental shrines. One of the most beautiful of these portable shrines made for a British saint is the châsse of St. Ursula, preserved in the Hospital of St. John at Bruges, in which the chief beauty is not of gold or silver or gems, but the exquisite miniature paintings of Hans Memling (Plates XIV. and XV.).

Sometimes the emblem of a saint was made as a reliquary for the relics of that saint, as that of St. Ursula in the church of St. Antonio at Padua, which is a model of a perfectly rigged ship, in allusion to her emigration.

In addition to those already mentioned were numerous smaller reliquaries of various designs, which became common during the latter Mediæval and Renaissance

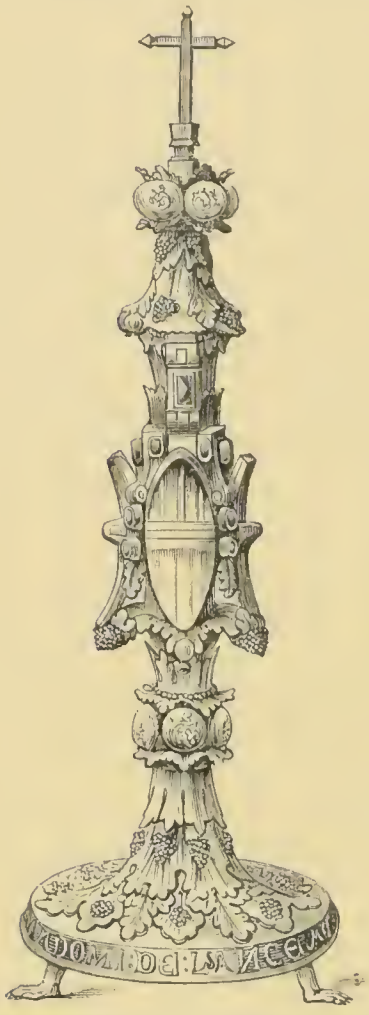


RELIQUARY OF THE HOLY BLOOD, BRUGES

Ages, such as phylacteries, ampulles, tabernacles, images, chests, caskets, glass-domed roundels, crystal cylinders, and others similar to a monstrance or ostensorium, each of which were mounted or supported in metal-work according to their individual requirements.

For extant examples of these reliquaries we must look

in the museums at home and the churches abroad; but the Lincoln inventories contain vivid descriptions of many of those which formerly existed in that cathedral church.



RELIQUARY OF THE HOLY THORN, ARRAS

"Item, one phylatorye of Cristall stonding upon iiij feete in playne sole sylver and gylte having a pynnacle in the hegth contenyng the toth of saynt hugh, weying with the contentes ij unces."

"Item, one Ampulle of crystal with a foot and covering of silver partly gilt, containing the relics of St. Edmund the Archbishop."

These small reliquaries were frequently arranged in a Reliquary Table, or Tabernacle, the doors of which were opened for their exposition; and in Henry the Eighth's injunctions for the destruction of shrines these tables are often mentioned.

Lincoln possessed a tabernacle of silver standing on four lions, with various images in colours, surmounted by the holy rood and attendant figures, elaborately jewelled, besides many made of wood. One of the latter opened with two leaves or doors, and contained the breastbone of St. Thomas de Cantilupe and many other relics.

The chests of relics were decorated with gold and silver, enamels and jewels, paintings, cloth of gold, and embroidery.

"Item, one fayre Chyste peynted and gylded w^{t} Armes precyouse stones and knottes of glas bordered w^{t} Corall many of them wantyng and peyntyd w^{t} yn like sylver contenyng dyverse Relikes."[1]

[1] *Lincoln Inventory.*

MONSTRANCE RELIQUARY OF THE FINGER OF ST. MARY MAGDALEN

IN THE POSSESSION OF SIR CHARLES ROBINSON, C.B.

A foreign example must again illustrate the lost treasures of England. The thirteenth-century chest containing the hair-cloths of St. Louis is of wood, covered with metal and painted with heraldic designs and allegorical subjects.

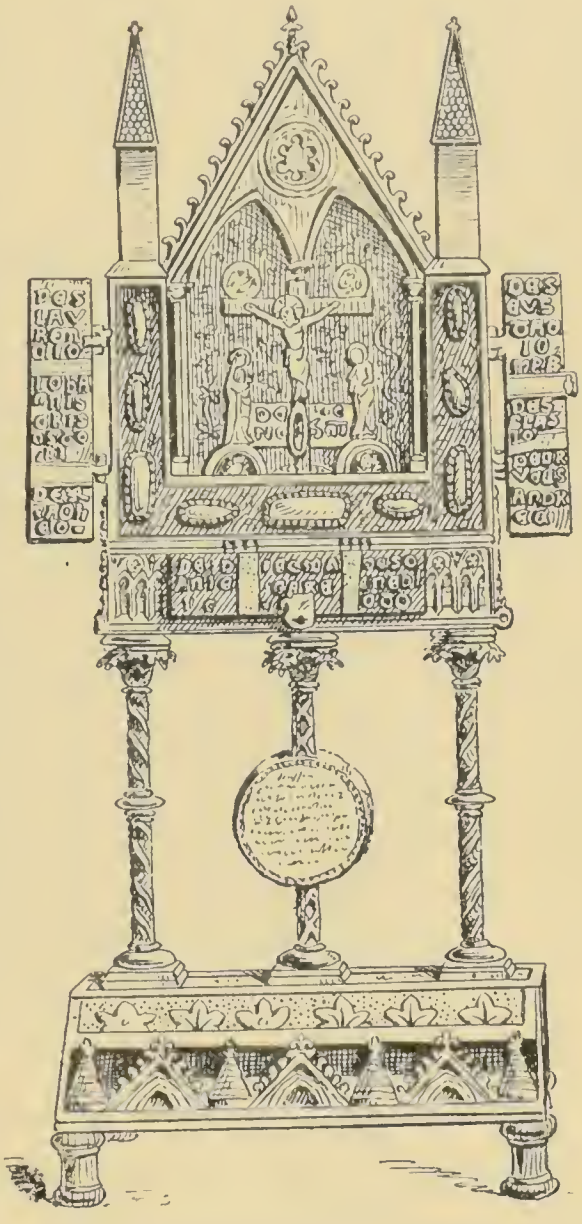


TABLE OF RELICS, MONS

The use of these chests will be understood if it be borne in mind that many of the reliquaries were put away, only to be exposed on certain festivals; while others, which were daily exhibited and were small enough to be removed, were nightly placed in the chests for safety. This would be necessary in a church possessing a great number of reliquaries—*e.g.* the cathedral of Canterbury, of which Erasmus said that the exhibition of relics seemed likely to last for ever, they were so numerous; and his testimony is borne out by the inventory contained in one of the cartularies of Christchurch,[1] which enumerates no fewer than four hundred items. It commences with a list of twelve bodies of saints—Sts. Thomas, Elphege, Dunstan, Odo, Wilfrid, Anselm, Ælfric, Blosi, Audoeni, Selvi, Wulgan, and Swithun. Eleven arms in jewelled silver-gilt shrines—Sts. Simeon, Blase, Bartholomew, George,

[1] *Cotton. MS.*, Galba, E., iv.

Wulfstan, Richard, Roman, Gregory the Pope, Hugh, Mildred, and Edburga. And three heads—

"The head of St. Blase in a silver head gilded,
The head of St. Furse in a silver head gilded and enamelled,
The head of St. Austroberta in a silver head enamelled and gilded,"

which were kept in the *great relic chest* near the high altar.

In addition to these are enumerated a multitude of others, which are not included in the title of this work.

RELIC CHEST OF ST. LOUIS

Some of the movable feretra also contained an accumulation of the relics of many saints. The most memorable instances are to be found in the Canterbury inventories.[1] One such example will suffice :—

In a chest of ivory with a crucifix
Some bones of Cosmas and Damian, martyrs.
Item, a bone of St. Wandregesilus, abbot and confessor.
bones of St. Augustine, bishop, confessor, and great doctor.

[1] *Inventories of Christchurch, Canterbury*, by J. Wickham Legg and W. H. St. John Hope.

ENGLISH RELIQUARY OF COPPER-GILT. 14TH CENTURY

THE SIDES ARE ENGRAVED WITH FIGURES OF SAINTS, AND THE COVER ENAMELLED IN RED AND BLACK, REPRESENTS ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON. APPLIQUÉ FIGURES HAVE BEEN ADDED AT A LATER DATE

Victoria and Albert Museum

Item, a bone of blessed Leo, pope and confessor.
a bone of St. Sampson, bishop, with one tooth of the same.
some dust of St. Discipulus.
a bone of St. Albin, confessor.
a bone of St. Honoratus.
some bones of SS. Remigius and Germanus, bishops.
some bones of SS. Machutus, Wulfran, and Martinian.
some bones of St. Anastasius, martyr.
some bones of St. Margaret, virgin.
some bones of St. Agnus, virgin and martyr.
a bone of St. Opportuna, virgin.
a bone of St. Amalburga, virgin.
a bone of St. Satildis, queen.
a bone of Keyneburga, virgin.
some of the hairs of St. Alburga, virgin, abbess of Barking Church.
some hairs of St. Barbara, virgin.
pieces of the clothes of St. Aldegunda, virgin.
three fingers and two teeth of St. Alban, the Protomartyr of England.
some bones of St. Cyriacus, priest and martyr, with three teeth.
some bones of SS. Gervasius and Protasius, martyrs.
some dust of St. Pancras, martyr.
some bones of St. Adrian, martyr.
some bones of St. Christopher, martyr.
some dust of SS. Crispin and Crispinian, martyrs.
a bone of St. Pantaleon.
some dust and vestments of St. Lambert, martyr.
a bone of St. Sixtus, pope.
some of the beard and vestments of St. Cuthbert, bishop and confessor.
some dust of St. Appollinaris, martyr.
some bones of St. Gregory, pope, with one tooth of the same.
some bones of St. Stephen, pope.
some bones of St. Wyngunaloc, abbot and confessor.
some dust of St. Sebastian, martyr.

Item, a rib of the blessed Appollinaris, martyr, with one tooth of the same.

a bone of St. Firmin, martyr and bishop.

a bone of St. Quintin, martyr.

a piece of the Lord's sepulchre.

a piece of the manger of the Lord.

part of the column to which our Lord was bound when He was scourged.

piece of the stone upon which the angel sat upon the tomb.

piece of the stone upon which Christ stood when He ascended into heaven.

a piece of Moses' rod which budded.

part of the stone upon which the Lord stood in Galilee.

from Gethsemane.

piece of the table at which the Lord ate the supper with His disciples and washed their feet.

an olive branch.

a piece of the prison from which the angel of the Lord delivered the blessed apostle Peter.

some of the clothes made by St. Mary, the mother of our Lord.

a piece of the pall which is over the Lord's sepulchre.

some of the hair and clothes of St. Anne, the mother of St. Mary.

of the clothes of St. Elias, St. Mary, and Martha her sister and St. Saphie, the virgin.

some of the dust of St. Benedicta.

RELIQUARY FROM ST. LORENZO

Pendant or pectoral reliquaries were in use at an early period throughout Christendom. Some were made to contain the consecrated Host, but others enclosed relics of the saints, and were worn as amulets. A cross was the usual form of these pectoral shrines ; and the late Cavalier di Rossi found such a one on the breast of a corpse in St. Lorenzo, outside Rome, and two others of the fifth century he

AMPULLA, OR PHIAL RELIQUARY

In the possession of Sir Charles R Wilson, C.B

describes as of silver, chased and jewelled, divided into compartments and inscribed with names. These, however, did not always contain relics of the body, but sometimes a fragment of some object associated with the saint.

One of the reliquaries mentioned in the will of Perpetuus, Bishop of Tours,[1] was of this type :—

"To thee, most dear Euphronius, brother and bishop, I give and bequeath my silver reliquary. I mean that which I have been accustomed to carry upon my person, for the reliquary of gold, which is in my treasury, another two golden chalices, and cross of gold, made by Mabuinus, do I give and bequeath to my church."

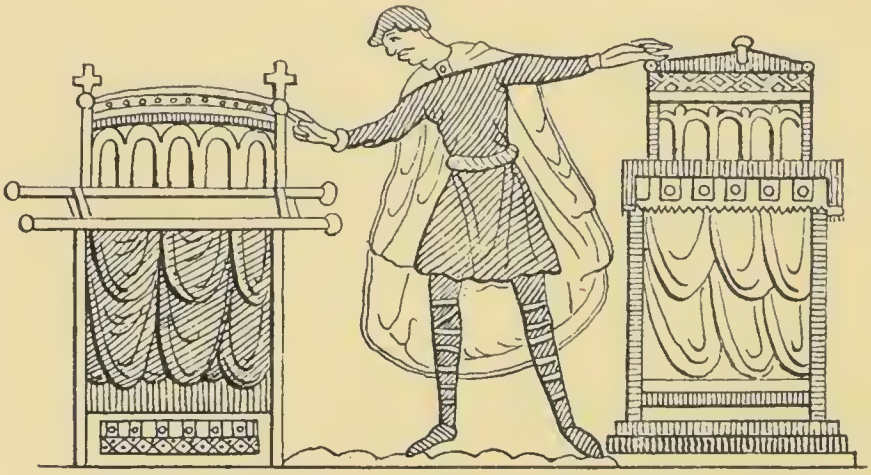
A pendant reliquary—a small silver skull—was found in 1829, whilst ploughing a field, which was formerly part of the ground of the abbey of Abingdon; and another of silver, suspended by a silver chain round the neck of a skeleton, was found in the churchyard of St. Dunstan's, Fleet Street, London, during the demolition of the old church in 1831. It is figured in the *Archæological Journal*, vol. v., where its dimensions are given as 2¼ inches in diameter and half an inch thick. On one side is represented St. George, and on the other the British St. Helen. At the top is a small aperture, through which to pass the relic, and which is closed by a movable shutter of the same metal.

In Battle Abbey there was a superb reliquary shaped like an altar, given by William I., which had been used by him for military Mass in the field, and which had accompanied his troops in their conquest of England. Possibly this was one of the two shrines represented in the Bayeux tapestry, whereon Harold, when William's prisoner in Normandy, was compelled to take an oath to support the duke's pretensions to the English throne before he could regain his liberty.

[1] *Circa* 477.

One of them is a portable feretrum, with the poles by which it was carried, placed on a draped pedestal; while the other appears to form part of a vested altar, and is probably that which was given to Battle Abbey.

Few names have been left to us of those who designed and fashioned these shrines and precious feretories of gold and silver. One such artist, Anketill, had been brought up as a goldsmith. He had passed seven years in superintending the royal mint in Denmark and in making curious articles for the Danish king, but return-



HAROLD TAKING THE OATH TO DUKE WILLIAM
Bayeux Tapestry

ing to England he became a professed brother in the monastery at St. Albans. There he made the feretrum of St. Alban, shrines for the relics of Sts. Bartholomew, Ignatius, Laurence, and Nigasius, and many articles of church furniture—thuribles, navets, and elaborate candlesticks.

Another from the same abbey undertook a similar work at Canterbury, not only as a worker in metals, but also as a designer, for we are told that the shrine of St. Thomas was the work of that incomparable official Walter de Colchester, sacrist of St. Albans, assisted by Elias de Dereham, canon of Salisbury.

CASKET SHRINE SET WITH ROCK CRYSTALS. 12TH CENTURY

LATIN, SHOWING BYZANTINE INFLUENCE

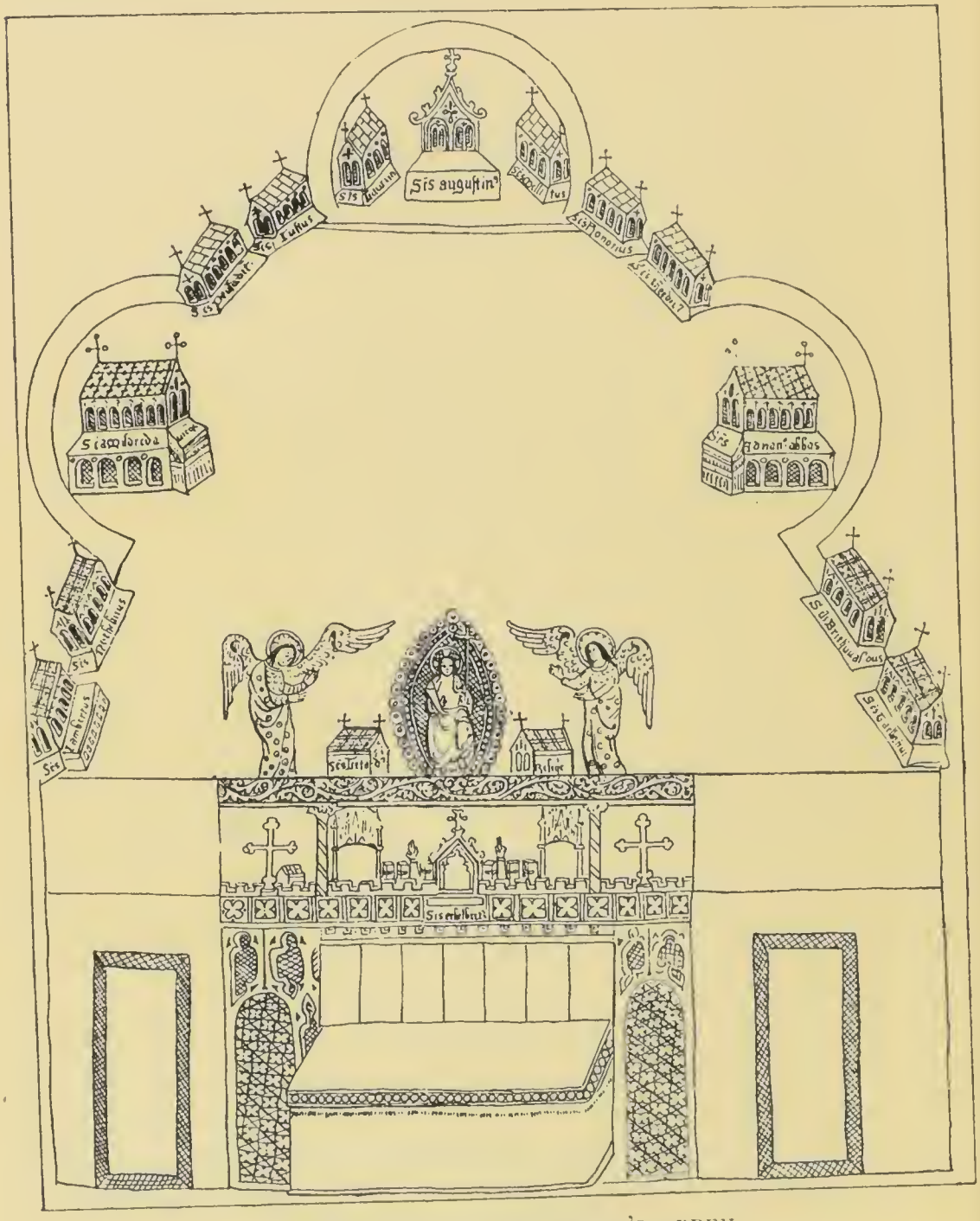
The name of "Peter the Roman citizen" may still be read on the shrine he made for St. Edward the Confessor, but of all the artificers of such works the greater number of names perpetuated are of skilful Irishmen. Three smiths, "expert at shaping," MacCecht, Laebhan, and Fortchern, are mentioned as belonging to St. Patrick's family, or monastic brethren; and three skilful artificers, Aesbuite, Tairill, and Tassach. St. Bridget's principal artist in gold, silver, and other metals was Bishop Conla. To properly understand a bishop being so employed, his peculiar position in a Celtic monastery must be considered. St. Dageus, who lived in the sixth century, was a prolific maker of shrines;[1] and of the hereditary mechanics of the monastery at Kells, Sitric MacAeda stands pre-eminent in the eleventh century.

The reputation of the saint influenced the position of the shrine, and in some cases controlled the plan of the church in which the shrine was erected. Various saints were held in different degrees of veneration by the faithful according to their local popularity, their lives, deaths, or the number of miracles attributed to them.

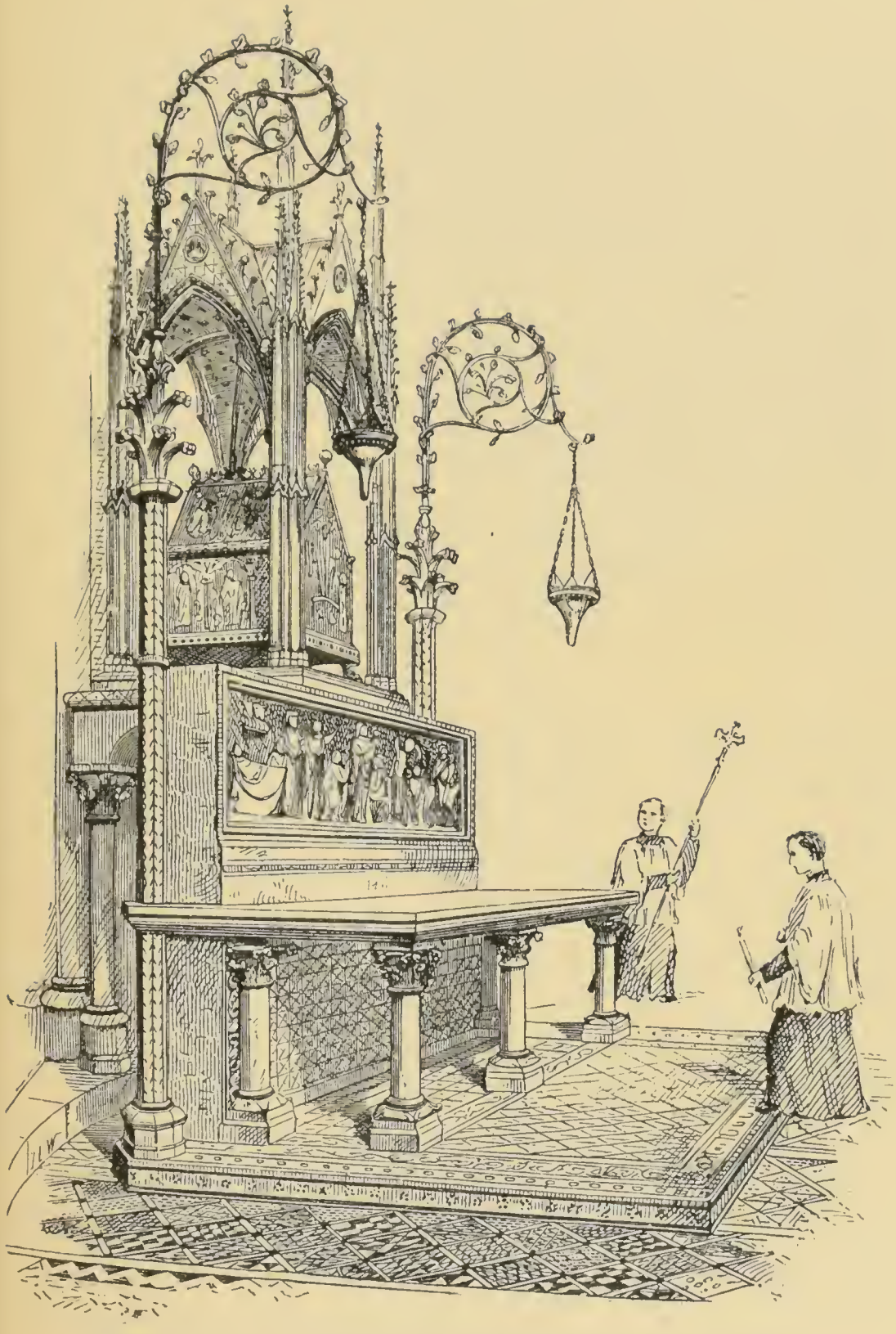
The space behind the high altar, the beam above the altar, or a separate chapel, was appropriated to the site for the shrine by the devotion accorded to the saint. Sts. Cuthbert and Swithun had small enclosures to the east of the high altar to contain their shrines, which enclosure at Durham was generally called "the *Feretory*." St. Thomas and St. Edward the Confessor were honoured with chapels to the east of the high altar, and in each case the provision for the shrine was considered in the architectural design for the rebuilding of Canterbury Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. The position of the numerous shrines in St. Augustine's monastery at Canterbury may be seen in a MS. written about 1414, now preserved in

[1] *Æt. SS. Aug.*, iii. 659 *n.*

Trinity Hall, Cambridge. There, behind the high altar, a screen is carried the entire width of the sanctuary, and in that part between the doors which lead to the chapels beyond is a reredos, or retable, arranged for the reception of reliquaries. In the centre are the relics of St. Ethelbert,



SHRINES IN ST. AUGUSTINE'S ABBEY
MS., Trinity Hall, Cambridge



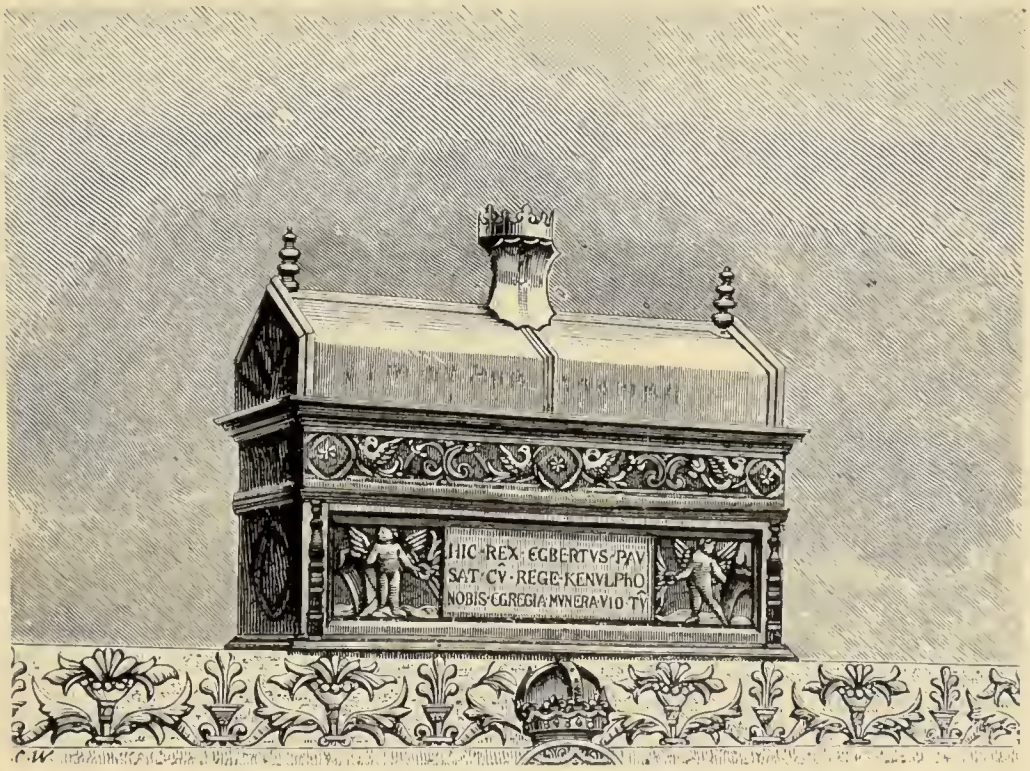
SHRINE OF STS. HILARIUS AND PATROCLUS OVER AN ALTAR
Formerly at St. Denis

the king of Kent, and on either side are the books sent by St. Gregory the Great to St. Augustine, amongst which are two arm reliquaries; on the north side is another small chest. Above, on the beam, rest two relic chests, one of which contains those of St. Letard. This drawing is most valuable as showing the arrangement surrounding the altar of a great church in England, and the position of the "beam," of which antiquaries frequently speak, but fail to explain. Behind the altar-screen are three chapels in which, and between which, are many shrines and feretories. Beginning at the left, or north side, are the shrines of Sts. Lambert and Nothelm, archbishops; St. Mildred, who usurped the place of St. Augustine as the patron of Canterbury; Sts. Deusdedit, Justus, Laurence, Augustine, Mellitus, Honorius, and Theodore, archbishops; St. Adrian, the abbot who accompanied St. Theodore to England; and Sts. Brithwald and Tatwine, archbishops. The three large shrines have altars attached, and that of St. Augustine occupies the place of honour in the easternmost chapel. A similar position was allotted to the intended shrine of King Henry VI. in Westminster Abbey, when unsuccessful efforts were made for his canonisation as the patron saint of England instead of St. George.

As we look at this drawing it is easy to understand the words of St. Dunstan when he said that every footstep he took within the precincts of St. Augustine's Abbey was planted on the grave of a saint.[1]

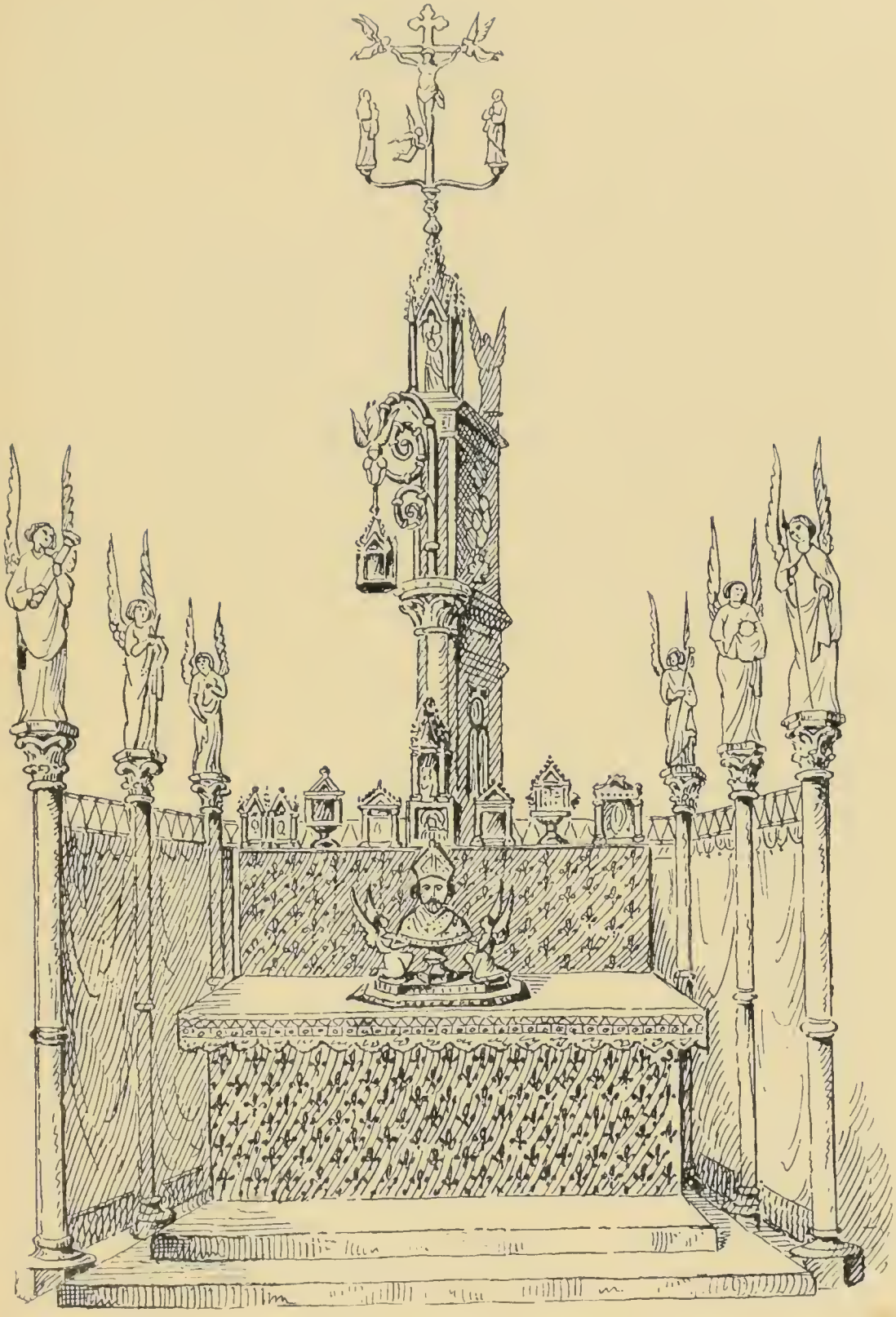
The position occupied by the feretory of Sts. Hilarius and Patroclus, when not being carried in procession, is seen in a representation of an altar which was formerly in the Lady Chapel of the Abbey of St. Denis, near Paris. And in a picture preserved in the sacristy of the cathedral of Arras is a thirteenth-century altar, formerly

[1] *Acta Sanctorum*, May 4th, p. 78.



RELIC CHESTS ON THE PARCLOSE SCREEN, WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL
EARLY 16th CENTURY

FROM "THE TOMBS OF THE KINGS OF ENGLAND"



ARRANGEMENT OF RELIQUARIES
Formerly at Arras

in that cathedral, showing the arrangement of reliquaries for a festival, where they form the retinue of the Divine Martyr of Calvary, flanking a pendent pyx containing the Host. In this a head shrine occupies the prominent position.

One shrine attracted others to its vicinity: thus at Canterbury Cathedral the "corona" of St. Thomas the Martyr also received the shrines of St. Odo and St. Wilfrid, the one on the north and the other on the south. To receive sepulchre near the tomb of a saint was considered one of the greatest honours that it was possible to bestow. It was thought to be helpful to the future life, and King John secured a position between two shrines which, sadly enough, he evidently anticipated would make an unrivalled presentation at the heavenly court.

The beam over the altar frequently bore one or more reliquaries, and at Canterbury a beam in another position served the same purpose, for we find in a book of obits of Christchurch Cathedral, from 1415–72, the following entry:—

"In the year 1448, on the ninth of the calends of April, four brethren of this church took from the high altar the shrine with the bones of St. Fleogild (Feologeld), archbishop of Canterbury, and carried it after the Lord's body to the shrine of St. Thomas and placed the shrine upon the beam spanning the arch leading into the chapel called the 'corona,' between the shrine of St. Thomas and the crown of St. Thomas."

Another position, but slightly differing from some of those mentioned, in which it actually formed the reredos, was adopted on the introduction of a different type of shrine—a glazed chest, or glass coffin, enclosing the body of the saint. This may be seen in the picture of Mont St. Claude, where the relics are enshrined behind the retable of the altar, and in the silver chapel of St. Carlo

RELIC CHEST, MADE BY HENRY DE BLOIS, BISHOP OF WINCHESTER

FROM "THE TOMBS OF THE KINGS OF ENGLAND"

Borromeo, beneath the pavement of Milan Cathedral. This custom never appears to have found favour with the churchmen of England, although the chest of our own Archbishop Edmund, at Pontigny, is glazed on the eastern side. In these pages continental examples have been noticed only so far as they assist in defining the fashioning and the position of shrines in England before the ruthless destruction of the sixteenth century; the only exceptions are of British saints whose relics are enshrined in foreign countries.

GLASS SHRINE AT THE BACK OF AN ALTAR

Very few shrines remain which contain or contained the relics of English saints, although this country was formerly unsurpassed in such riches. William of Malmesbury was convinced that "nowhere could be found the bodies of so many saints entire after death"—typifying, as he thought, the state of final incorruption—as in England.

"I myself know of five, but people tell of more. The five are Sts. Etheldreda and Werburga the virgins, King Edmund, Archbishop Elphege, and the old father Cuthbert. All these,

perfect in skin and flesh, from their flexible joints and lively warmth, appear to be merely asleep. To the above I can add the body of St. Ivo, St. Edward the King and Confessor, St. Wulstan the Bishop, St. Guthlac the Hermit, and those English saints who died in foreign lands, namely, St. Edilburg the Virgin ; St. Lullus, Archbishop of Mentz ; and St. Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury."[1]

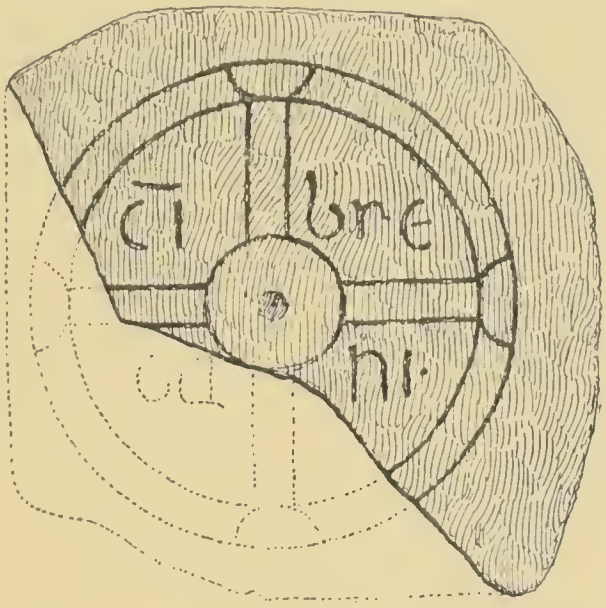
Now we can only assemble around the shrine of St. Edward the Confessor, the solitary survival of a great shrine retaining the relics of the saint, in this country—a Marian restoration ; or visit the reliquary of St. Eanswith at Folkestone, the only one of the kind in England known to have been preserved undisturbed ; unless a journey is made across the seas to the shrine of St. Edmund at Pontigny, or to some of those foreign places where relics of Celtic saints may yet be found. True, England still possesses a few of the relics of her saints, but even those are for the most part in debased positions and all but forgotten. It is not generally known that the skulls of Sts. Probus and Grace are hidden in a cavity of the wall behind the altar of Probus church in Cornwall. They were recently exposed when the church was restored, but again walled up, awaiting the time when they may be brought forth without fear of desecration. Nor is it common knowledge that the relics of Sts. Bede, Cuthbert, and Oswald lie beneath the pavement at Durham. For those few which have again been enshrined the country is indebted to the energy of papal churchmen.

The shrines of Great Britain which are now to be considered are principally of two kinds, which united made the complete shrine : the fixed shrines of masonry and the portable feretra, with a few of the quadrangular reliquaries, traced through the writings of the chroniclers, from draw-

[1] William of Malmesbury, bk. ii. c. 13.

ings made by hands long since dissolved in mother earth, or from fragments recently recovered from obscurity.

Yet in searching for some knowledge of the great shrines the more simple memorials of our saints must not be ignored. The humble tombstone of St. Brecan's Head at Hartlepool, inscribed CI (capiti) BRECANI (sixth century); his grave at Kilbrecan, in which was a spherical black stone inscribed, in Irish, "Pray for Brecan the Pilgrim"; or the rudely sculptured tombstone of St. Molio at Arran,



ST. BRECAN'S HEADSTONE, HARTLEPOOL

and many another exalted to no honoured state, are in their way as truly shrines as were those of magnificent workmanship.

The humility of the saint is ofttimes seen in his choice of a place of burial. St. Swithun desired a grave outside his cathedral at Winchester over which the passer's foot might tread and the rain from the eaves would fall. Others are amusingly credited with discontent if their tombs were not exalted to greater honour.

St. Edward the King and Martyr was at first ignominiously buried in an unknown spot, and when his body

was discovered it was removed to a tomb at the north side of the high altar of Shaftesbury Abbey. Some of the stones subsided and the uppermost slab was displaced. It was said that St. Edward was wrath at so lowly a station, and by this upheaval demonstrated his displeasure. The report reached the ears of King Ethelred, for whose elevation to the throne the crime had been perpetrated, and he, stricken with remorse, decided that reparation should at last be made and his former rival duly honoured. The relics were lifted from the tomb—giving forth a fragrant odour—and placed in a feretory which was deposited in the "Holy of Holies" with the relics of other saints. The exact position of this "Holy of Holies" at Shaftesbury is not mentioned, it may have been on a beam above the high altar; but from the attention it afterwards received, the rich offerings made, from Canute throughout the Middle Ages, and the indulgences granted to pilgrims to this shrine, it was probably one of the great shrines of the Canterbury type, built in a separate chapel behind the high altar.

The usual features of the great fixed shrines consisted of three distinct parts. The substructure of stone, or marble, built with recesses in the lower portion—in which pilgrims, seeking the healing virtues of the saint, might crouch as close as possible to the relics—was decorated with a wealth of sculpture or mosaic. This part, as we have seen in the shrine of St. Egwin, was appropriately called *the throne*. On this rested the feretrum, or chest, containing the body, covered with plates of gold, surrounded by golden statues, and which the offerings of generations of pilgrims enriched with precious cameos and jewels. To preserve these treasures the third portion —a wooden box-like cover—was made to work on pulleys and could thus be raised for exposition to the pilgrims, or lowered over the feretory and locked to secure it from

thieves, a very necessary precaution when the value of the offerings is considered.

These offerings were not—as is too often assumed—taken by the priest in charge for his own advantage; but were always allocated, and careful accounts were rendered, as is shown by the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* and the fragments of church accounts still preserved.

When St. Osmund was canonised the Papal Bull expressly disposed of them. The first object was to be the proper adornment of the shrine, then the debts due to those who had lent money for the purposes of the canonisation were to be paid, and the rest to be applied to the repair of the fabric of the cathedral.

All the choir of Rochester Cathedral was built from the offerings at St. William's shrine; while the money alone, without the various jewels, offered at St. Thomas's shrine at Canterbury averaged an amount which would now be equal to about £4,000 a year. Yet were these shrines occasionally spoliated for causes righteous as well as unrighteous, independently of the final sacrilege of Henry VIII. Twice was the gold stripped from the feretory of St. Alban during times of famine to save the lives of the poor, though again it was defaced to raise funds for the purchase of an estate. King Ethelred, on the authority of the spurious Ingulph, in his attempt to free the land of the ravaging Danes by bribery instead of by arms, not only seized the sacred vessels of churches but even ordered the very shrines of the saints to be spoiled. Through a dispute with their bishop, the monks of Rochester had to coin the silver shrine of St. Paulinus to defray the expenses incurred; and the shrine of St. Wulfstan at Worcester was melted down to pay the tribute imposed on the monks by Prince Louis of France.

In addition to this kind of robbery another danger had

to be guarded against—the thieving of relics. Many instances will be met with in the following pages of the ecclesiastics of one church robbing another of the relics of saints for the greater honour of their own establishment, the refined deceits they had recourse to for that purpose, and also the trickery resorted to by the possessors of such treasures to frustrate unholy covetousness.

The most famous monasteries were at times guilty of such nefarious deeds; Glastonbury, Durham, and Ely were not free from this reproach, and in some instances two or more different churches claimed to possess the entire body of the same saint; this, however, seldom affected the devotion of the faithful, but it has affected many details of history.

Small wonder that custodians were appointed to specially care for the shrines, a post which was no sinecure at a popular place of pilgrimage. It was a charge of no mean responsibility, and the *Custos Feretri* or *Feretarius* in many cases had certain retainers to assist him, not only in cleaning and exhibiting, but in guarding it against those apparently pious folk who, scorning to steal a jewel, would not hesitate to avail themselves of an opportunity to gain possession of a fragment of the actual relics. By such robberies were the bones of St. Bede and St. Lewinna surreptitiously *translated*, while the will was not wanting though the means were not available to do the same with St. Alban and St. Dunstan.

In addition to the constant watchers appointed over these treasures, dogs were sometimes employed. During the winter months, at Canterbury, the shrine was guarded by a troop of fierce ban-dogs,[1] and Dalmatian dogs were used for the protection of the shrine in the church of St. Anthony at Padua.

Altars dedicated to a particular saint were frequently

[1] Ellis's *Original Letters*, 3rd Series, iii. 64.

built adjoining his shrine. The position of the altar of St. Edward the Confessor, restored at the time of the coronation of Edward VII., was clearly discernible at the west end of his shrine by a slab of mosaic, which formed the reredos, and in which were holes at either side for the riddels, or curtain rods, to be fixed.

Curious expedients were sometimes resorted to—according to monastic chroniclers—to determine the ownership of saints' relics and the locality for the shrine, when a contention arose between rival churches for such an honour. After the death of St. Patrick there was a keen contest between the churches of Saul and Armagh. To settle which should be the happy possessor, two untamed bulls were yoked to the cart which bore his body and left to go whither they would. They stopped at a spot where now stands the church of Downpatrick, and there we are told he was buried. In 1186, Giraldus Cambrensis says, his body was found in that place together with the bodies of St. Columba and St. Bridget, and that when they were translated from so humble a position the following couplet was written :—

> "In the town of Down, buried in one grave
> Bridget, Patrick and the pious Columba."

If the travels of sundry relics—and consequently of their feretories—were recorded, it would be a wondrous story of devotion, hardship, and terror, combined with legend, and not altogether free from superstition.

The peregrinations of St. Cuthbert's shrine are well known, and the journeyings of St. Columba's shrine were almost as extensive ; but whereas the first became settled in one place and the relics of the saint are yet with us, the latter have been utterly lost.

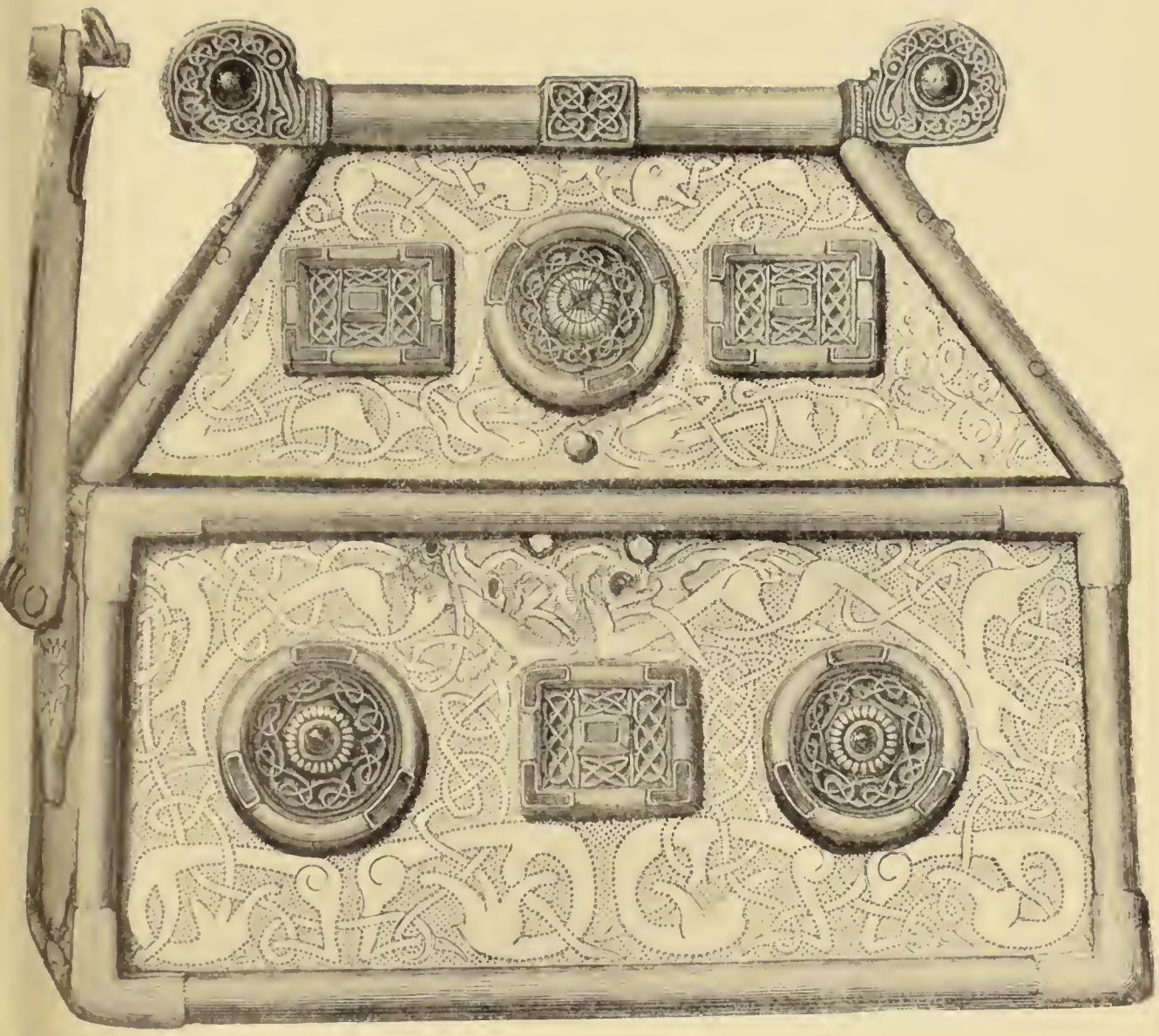
St. Columba was buried in the royal burying ground in the island of Iona. About the beginning of the ninth century Connachtach, Abbot of Iona, carried the relics to

Kells, in Ireland, evidently in order to have them placed in one of those beautiful Irish reliquaries; and there St. Columba's bones were enshrined. In 807, when the Book of Armagh was written, this shrine was preserved in the church of St. Patrick, County Down. In 818 Diarmid returned to Ireland, taking with him St. Columba's shrine, which had become the title-deed of the Columban community at Iona. A rumour of the richness of this portable shrine excited the cupidity of the piratical Northmen who, in 825, descended on the isle, and Iona was devastated, but they failed to discover the object of their raid. When the Danish ships were seen to approach, the monks had hastily dug a grave for the shrine and covered it with turf. The brethren were slain; life was offered to St. Blathmac if he would deliver to them the precious metal which enclosed the bones of the saint, but refusing, he too was martyred. In 850 King Kenneth MacAlpin built a church at Scone, or Dunkeld, into which he moved the shrine.[1]

In 878 it was again in Ireland, and apparently remained there until it was seized by the Danes of Dublin in the twelfth century. The relics were restored, but of the shrine we hear no more. Saul, Downpatrick, Durham, Dunkeld, and Glastonbury contended that each had his relics, while many another monastery asserted that they possessed fragments.

In regarding the formation of the shrines it must be remembered that the virtues of the saint are held to permeate the structure, and that by contact with the shrine those virtues are *by faith* transmitted to the pilgrim. The diseased limb was pressed into one of the niches provided around the basement for that purpose, into which sundry articles were placed to receive the benediction of the holy one, and in the illumination of St. Edward's shrine

[1] *Chronicon Pictorum.*



THE MONYMUSK RELIQUARY, SUPPOSED TO BE THE BRECBENNOCH, OR *VEXILLUM*, OF ST. COLUMBA. ACTUAL SIZE

FROM DR. ANDERSON'S "SCOTLAND IN EARLY CHRISTIAN TIMES"

(page 227) a pilgrim may be seen creeping through an opening. There was also a prevailing idea that a healing oil exuded from the tombs of certain saints as those of St. Andrew, St. Katherine, and St. Robert, the founder of the Robertines at Knaresborough, which are said to have sweated a medicinal oil.

The sanctity of an oath was considered far more binding if taken upon the relics or shrine of a saint. For this reason was the Saxon Harold made to swear on a shrine as before mentioned (page 17). Through the continuance of this custom did the priest of Drumlane lose possession of the feretrum of St. Moedoc (page 80). For this purpose did many people resort to the shrine of St. Teilo (page 96); and in the *Romance de Parise la Duchesse* the two combatants—Milio and Berengiers—swear to the righteousness of their cause on—

> "· · · la chase del baron San Martin,
> Cet del baron San Gile, et del cor Saint Firmin."

In mediæval times it was customary, both at home and abroad, for the custodians of many of the shrines to manufacture tokens of lead which were sold to pilgrims who pinned them to their hats or dress, thereby publishing to the world their pilgrim achievements, in the same manner as the Mahomedan, who has visited the tomb of his prophet at Mecca, wears a special badge. Many of these "pilgrims' signs" have been found at different times; those of St. Thomas of Canterbury by far exceeding in number and variety of design those of any other saint, thereby confirming the popularity of the Canterbury shrine. These emblems being so closely associated with the shrines, some few of them are represented in the articles on those shrines where the tokens were bestowed.

In a few instances—as with St. Cuthbert and St. Thomas—more particulars are considered than are abso-

lutely necessary for a description of those shrines. A few details are given which bear a close relation to the actual relics. They serve to show the spirit which influenced the erection and embellishment of such monuments, and to reveal the *raison d'être* of certain ceremonies observed in the translation of the relics from one shrine to another of greater beauty and more distinguished position.

CHAPTER II

ST. ALBAN AND ST. AMPHIBALUS

OF all British shrines St. Alban's demands primary consideration, not only as that of Britain's proto-martyr, and as one of the type of great shrines, but as the best and most marvellous of restorations. Not the shrine of prelate or king, but of a layman; not of one who had been reared by Christian parents, or tutored by theologians, but of a convert, who, strong in his newly acquired faith, was the first in this country to give his life to Him who had bled for mankind.

When the persecution of Diocletian ceased, a small chapel is said to have been built over St. Alban's grave on the top of a hill situated to the north of Verulam city. At the invasion of the Saxons in the sixth century this chapel was ruined, and during the two hundred years of paganism which followed, the grave of St. Alban was forgotten.

Owing to a vision of the Mercian king Offa (so runs the story), in which he was admonished to search for the martyr's body and exalt it to a place of honour, a monastery was founded and the relics of St. Alban were placed in a shrine in 795. It was only a simple monument, but it excited the covetousness of the semi-Christian Danish invaders, who, intent on plunder, broke it open and carried off the relics to Denmark, where they were deposited in a monastery of Black monks at Owensee.

By strategy the relics were restored to their own church.

The sacrist of St. Albans, Ergwin, followed the pirates to Denmark, and became a postulant in the abbey to which the relics had been taken. He showed himself such a devotee of St. Alban that the shrine was placed in his charge, when he contrived to remove the relics and to secretly despatch them to England, after which he seized the first opportunity to return to St. Albans.

The ambition of many succeeding abbots was to make a shrine worthy of Britain's proto-martyr, and for this purpose they collected a great number of precious stones. Marble and pillars were excavated from the ruins of Verulam, which formed a veritable quarry of material already worked ; but before their object was attained many of the jewels were sold by Abbot Leofric to allay the distress consequent on a famine, only retaining certain stones and cameos for which he could find no purchaser. When next a Danish incursion was expected Ælfric concealed the relics of St. Alban in a wall, while he sent a chest of bones—professedly of the saint—to Ely, with a request that the abbot and monks of that monastery would receive them into safe custody until the danger was past.

Such a treasure the monks of Ely were loth to part with, but the St. Albans fraternity understood that weakness—the coveting of relics—and had, as we have seen, made provision for its occurrence ; at the same time spreading abroad the report of their removal, thus hoping to hoodwink the Danes and escape their ravages.

When all fear was past, the precaution of the St. Albans monks was found to be fully justified, for those of Ely returned certain bones, but not the same as they had received, and they afterwards boasted that they possessed the relics and how they had overreached their too confiding friends. But they rejoiced in their fraud prematurely, and their pride was broken when, from a cavity in the wall, the abbot of St. Albans drew forth the bones

of their patron saint. Those bones sent from Ely were deposited in a wooden chest, in which St. Alban had been laid in the time of Offa, and in future years that also came to be venerated in consequence of its former association with the martyr.

At last Abbot Geoffrey ordered the work of the shrine to be again taken in hand. The copper was overlaid with plates of beaten gold. Sixty pounds[1] had already been spent on the feretory, when famine again impoverished the country, and the precious metals were stripped off for the benefit of the starving.

This was in the year 1128, but the following year was one of plenty, and the long-delayed work was accomplished. It was made by Monk Anketill, who had been a goldsmith before joining the brethren, was of silver gilt, and decorated with a profusion of gems; but the uppermost crest was not finished, as they had not collected a sufficiency of jewels.

Scarcely was it completed before it was again destroyed, not to relieve the starving poor this time, but to buy the manor of Brentfield. The monks were indignant. Why should the vessels of gold on the abbot's table be spared while the shrine of the saint was defaced? Abbot Ralph's action was sacrilegious; but he made compensation which was for the ultimate honour of St. Alban, for he appropriated the greater part of the rents of that manor to the perpetual keeping-up of the shrine.

The next abbot, Robert de Gorham, solicited the Pope —Adrian IV., the Englishman—to take measures to compel the monks of Ely to forbear asserting that they were the possessors of the true relics. It was asserted that St. Alban sometimes issued from and returned to his shrine, thereby testifying that his relics were safe in his own church and not at Ely.[2] Adrian accordingly directed

[1] About £1,500 of the present day. [2] Matt. Paris, *Vitæ Abbot*, p. 997.

a commission of three bishops to make a strict inquiry. They went to Ely and on pain of excommunication the convent confessed "that they had been deceived by a pious fraud; that they had perpetuated sacrilege, and were without one bone of St. Alban."[1] This abbot once again restored the feretory, as it was before Ralph's vandalism, with much ornament of gold, silver, and precious stones. The succeeding abbot employed John, a goldsmith, to yet further embellish the shrine, and Matthew of Paris, that indefatigable historian and artist, says that he had never seen one more splendid and noble. To him we are indebted for a drawing of it, which, together with his description, enables us to realise the beauty of the shrine of England's most notable saint.

In those days the high altar screen had not been built, and the feretory could be seen by those in the choir, over the dorsal, as it stood on a stone substructure. This feretrum on the two sides was overlaid with figures of gold and silver, showing the acts of St. Alban in high relief. At the eastern end was a large crucifix with the attendant figures of St. Mary and St. John, ornamented with splendid jewels; and at the western end was an image of the Blessed Virgin seated on a throne with the Divine Infant in her arms, of silver gilt, highly embossed, and brilliant with precious stones, costly bracelets, and jewels. At each of the four corners was a pillar to support the canopy, resembling towers, with apertures to represent windows all of plate gold, and the inside of the canopy was covered with crystal stones.[2]

In this drawing the feretory has been taken down from the fixed shrine and placed on a bier, richly draped, or the poles have been passed through attached rings, and it is being carried in procession on the shoulders of four monks.

[1] Matt. Paris. [2] *Ibid.*

This beautiful work was unfortunately done with borrowed money, and at the death of the abbot, among the creditors who pressed their claims was one Aaron, a Jew, who came to the abbey and boasted "that *he* had built that noble shrine; and that all the grand entertainment of the place had been furnished out of *his* money."

While making some repairs at the east end of the church in 1256 the original coffin of St. Alban, which had long since been discarded, was found, and by its old

THE FERETORY OF ST. ALBAN

Cottonian MS., Nero, D.I.

associations with the saint had become endowed with miraculous properties, as was attested on that occasion. The following year the king came to the shrine and offered a curious and splendid bracelet, valuable rings, and a large silver cup, in order to deposit therein the dust and ashes of the venerable martyr; he also gave some palls of silk to cover the old monument of the saint. On another occasion he had offered rich palls, bracelets, and gold rings, and gave the convent permission to convert them into money, provided they expended it in decorating

the shrine. Among the permanent decorations of the feretrum were two suns of gold.

Thomas de la Mare added many valuable ornaments to the shrine, and a large eagle of silver and gilt which stood on the crest, the gift of Abbot Michael, he re-beautified.

Among the benefactors to the shrine, Edward I. gave a large image of silver gilt; Edward III. offered many rich jewels of gold and precious stones; and Richard II. presented a necklace for the image of the Blessed Virgin which was on the west end of the feretory. Other pilgrims offered various gifts: Adam Panlyn gave a silver basin which was suspended over the shrine to receive alms; Lord Thomas of Woodstock, a necklace of gold adorned with sapphire stones, with a pendant of a white swan expanding its wings, and two cloths of gold for a covering for the shrine; Sir Robert de Walsam, precentor of Sarum, gave jewels; another gave a sapphire "of admirable beauty"; and another a richly ornamented zone.

The abbot John Wheathampsted had the Life of St. Alban translated from Latin into English at a cost of three pounds (about £50), and deposited it on the shrine for the edification of the pilgrims. He also, at his own expense, had a picture of the saint painted and decorated with gold and silver, which he suspended over the shrine; and it was said that the ornament exceeded the merit of the artist. It cost 50 marks, besides 795 ounces of plate used in embellishing it.

Many names of the custodians of these treasures find mention in the numerous manuscripts written in the scriptorium of this abbey, one of whom—Robert Trynoth, *feretrius*—was buried in the retro-choir, beneath the shadow of those shrines he had so diligently tended.

The fixed structure on which the feretory rested was

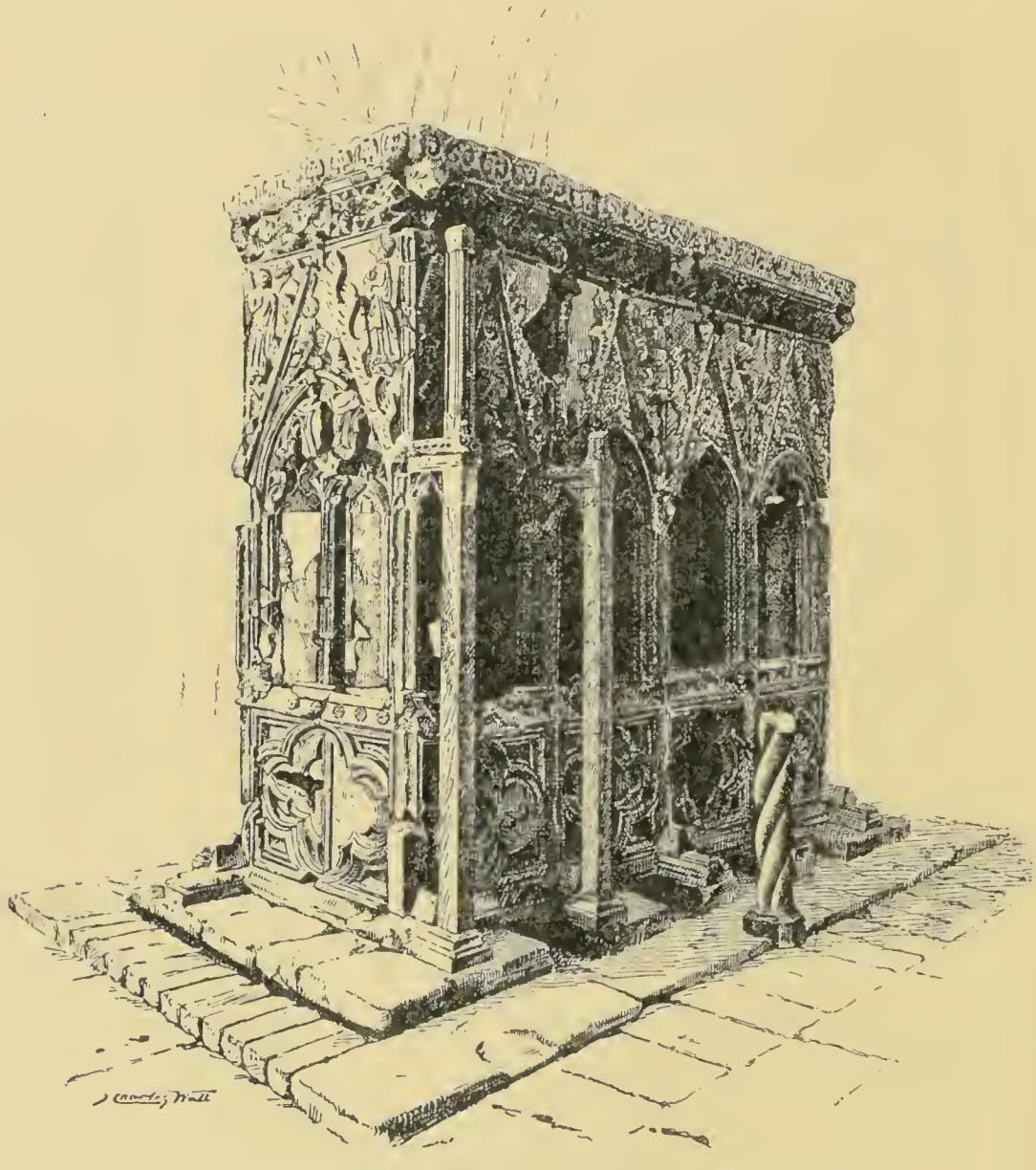
taken down by Abbot John (1302–1308) and replaced by one of greater magnificence at a cost of 820 marks; the remains are visible at the present day. No representation of this was left to us, and until quite recently the form of it was unknown.

Desecration and destruction (which may be followed in detail with the shrines of St. Cuthbert and St. Thomas) obliterated this shrine in the sixteenth century, and for three hundred years no one could say what kind of memorial had been raised as the sepulchre of St. Alban.

In 1847 the rector had certain walled-up arches and windows reopened, and among the *débris* were found many fragments of beautifully wrought Purbeck marble. These were carefully preserved, and when, in 1872, a great number of corresponding pieces were discovered, Mr. J. T. Micklethwaite, assisted by the foreman of the works, patiently fitted together over two thousand fragments of marble and clunch—a veritable work of love, which restored the greater part of the substructure whereon the feretory had rested. It was a marvellous accomplishment, and it enables the present generation to picture the beauty it presented to the pilgrims who thronged around the shrine.

This structure, 8 feet 4 inches in height, is composed of a panelled base decorated with quatrefoils, upon which rise ten canopied niches, with backgrounds of thin plates of coloured clunch yet retaining much of their colouring—vermilion and blue—blazoned with the three lions of England, the fleur-de-lys of France, and stars, all in gold. The pediment is sculptured with scenes of St. Alban's passion, with censing angels, and statuettes of kings and prelates, and above is a foliated cornice. Fourteen slender square shafts surrounded the shrine, and on each side three cable-pattern shafts supported images or tapers.

The third portion of the shrine—the protecting cover—is the only part of which we have no representation. It was presumably of wainscot similar to those of St. Thomas and St. Cuthbert (see pages 160, 191); it was certainly



SHRINE OF ST. ALBAN

made on the same principle, to be lowered over the costly feretrum for protection and to be raised to exhibit it to the pilgrims, for in the roof immediately over the centre of the shrine is a hole through which a pulley was fixed: and

ST. ALBAN'S SHRINE. EAST END

WITH THE WATCHING GALLERY AND RELIC AUMBRY

if it is this canopy which is mentioned by Matthew of Paris as having the inside covered with crystal stones, what a spectacle it must have presented, as it slowly rose before the assembled pilgrims! The lights from innumerable tapers would cause the crystals to scintillate with an indescribable magnificence.

The watch-loft on the north side of the shrine is the most perfect left to us. It is a two-storied building of oak; in the lower portion are aumbries, which contained various smaller relics, and which have shutters to ensure their safety. A narrow stairway of oaken beams ascends to the watching-chamber above, in which was posted a monk to see that no damage was done to the feretrum when the protecting cover was raised and the jewelled reliquary exposed for the veneration of the pilgrims.

At the demolition of shrines there were among the ornaments brought to the treasure-house of Henry VIII. "great agates, cameos, and coarse pearles set in gold, from St. Albans," some of which were probably the antique gems which had been gleaned from the ruins of the Roman city of Verulam by the early abbots of St. Albans.

A few shrines have in latter days been partially restored, but in no other case has there been so complete and wonderful a restoration as we have at St. Albans.

ST. AMPHIBALUS

Within the same old abbey another shrine has been re-erected—the shrine of St. Alban's teacher, the priest who had been instrumental in bringing St. Alban into the Church; the priest who, by St. Alban's exchange of cloaks, had been enabled to escape his persecutors for a time, allowing the latest convert to be the first to witness by his blood the faith of Christ. Whether St. Amphibalus be the name of the man, or a name conferred through the

incident of the cloak, matters not; by that name is the martyr revered, and by that name has he been known for generations in the Church's calendar.

St. Amphibalus was apprehended very shortly after the martyrdom of St. Alban. He was brought with certain of his converts to the village of Redbourn, where they were stoned to death and buried in the field where they suffered. Their relics were afterwards found and brought to St. Albans in 1178. The bones of St. Amphibalus were put in one gilt chest, and those of his companions in another, both the chests being enclosed in one monument on the right hand of the high altar. They did not, however, remain long in this position, for the succeeding abbot, Warren de Cambridge, caused them to be translated with great solemnity on the 8th of the Calends of July, 1186, to a new shrine richly adorned with gold and silver. St. Amphibalus now had a separate monument close to the wall on the north of the altar and next to the upper pier, while his co-martyrs had separate reliquaries.

Hitherto the shrine of St. Amphibalus had been in close proximity to that of St. Alban, but when William de Trumpington became abbot he prepared another position for it, where St. Amphibalus should be venerated by himself and not receive a mere share of the divided attention of the pilgrims with the proto-martyr. This was in the middle of the ante-chapel of the Lady Chapel, or the retro-choir, where a high fixed shrine was decorated by Walter de Colchester, the sacrist, who was an excellent painter and an "incomparable carver." It was enclosed with an iron grating, "where had been fixed a decent altar with a painting and other suitable ornaments"; and the whole was consecrated by the Irish bishop of Ardfert. The two gilt shrines in which the relics of St. Amphibalus and his companions had first been deposited were given to the

newly built church at Redbourn to honour that place with mementoes of its own martyrs, and the abbot appointed that a perpetual guard should be kept over them both day and night by a relay of monks.

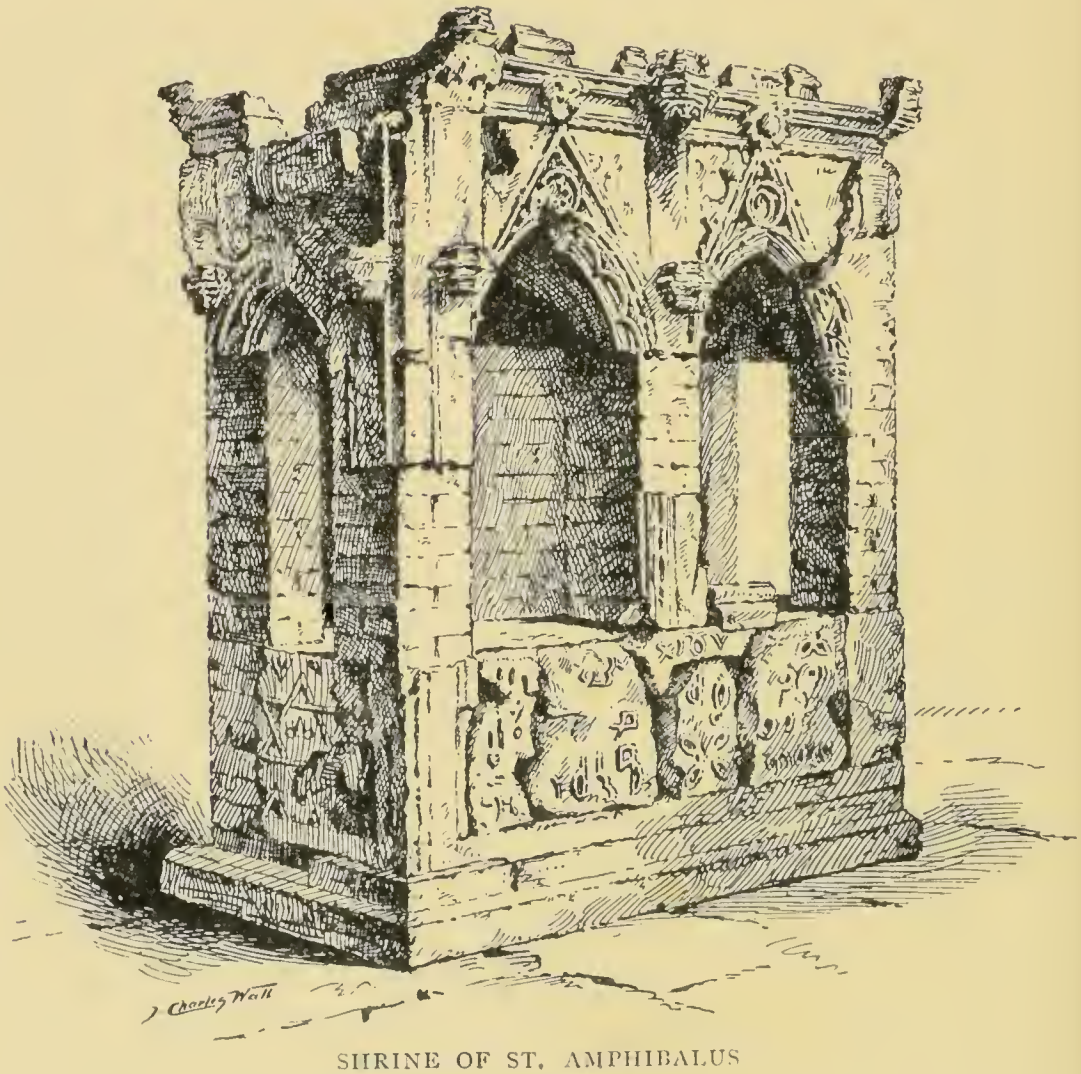
The shrine of St. Amphibalus was rebuilt, during the time of Abbot Thomas de la Mare, at the cost of the sacrist, Ralph Witechurche, and the eastern end was adorned by the abbot with images and silver-gilt plates at a cost of £8 8*s*. 10*d*. (about £168 16*s*. 8*d*.).

At the time when the fragments of St. Alban's shrine were found (1872), many pieces of finely carved white stone, or clunch, were also discovered, which proved to be parts of the pedestal of the shrine of St. Amphibalus. These have been fitted together, and although in a very fragmentary and imperfect state, sufficient has been restored to enable a fairly correct conclusion as to its former appearance.

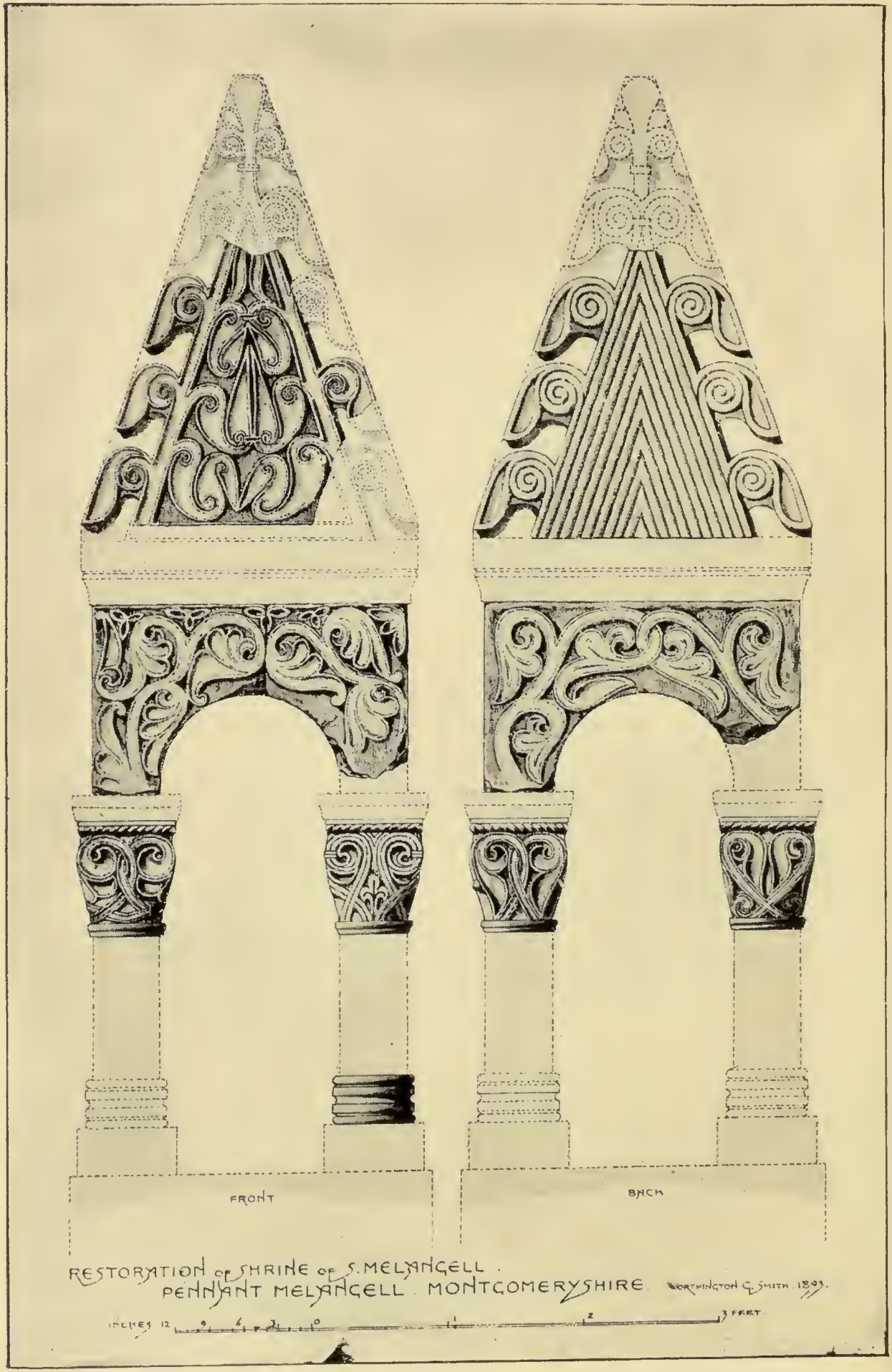
Standing on a step of 6 inches in height is a basement 23 inches high, 6 feet long, and nearly 4 feet wide. This is covered with a curiously sculptured fretwork, the western end bearing the remains of the saint's name, AMPHIB . . . S and a fleur-de-lys. On the north and south sides are the initials R. W. of Ralph Witechurche and fleurs-de-lys; but the eastern end, which was decorated with silver-gilt figures, is naturally lost.

Above the basement, on either side, is an open arcade of two bays, and at each end is a single arch, all of which are canopied and have straight-sided crocketed pediments. Originally there were three shafts at each side and two at the ends, of which only the capitals remain; they are elaborately sculptured with a goat and masks, and some of them retain traces of colour and gilding. Surmounting the whole is a cornice 12 inches high, making the total height from the pavement 7 feet 7 inches.

Another relic of St. Amphibalus—a hand, or fragment of that member—was enshrined in a hand reliquary, richly decorated with silver and precious stones, and presented by William Westwyck, who for so great a benefaction was awarded a final resting-place near the shrine of that saint in the retro-choir close by the altar of the "four wax candles."



SHRINE OF ST. AMPHIBALUS



FROM THE ARCHÆOLOGICAL CAMBRENSIS, 5TH SERIES, NO. 42

By kind permission of J. Romilly Allen, Esq.

CHAPTER III

SHRINES OF VIRGINS AND MATRONS

THE proto-martyr of Britain claimed first attention, and with him a priest, inseparably associated in life and in death and in the contiguity of their shrines beneath one roof. But women ever proved themselves strong in the faith of Christ; the first to realise that the promise of a Messiah was to be fulfilled; great in self-denial and perseverance from that day when, at the foot of the Cross, they boldly clung to their Saviour, ignoring the derision of the world; the first at the sepulchre; and first, too, through those days of terrible persecution when their blood freely flowed in the arena.

The virgins and matrons of Britain ever showed exemplary devotion to Christianity, infusing their fervour into the hearts of Britain's sons.

Women shall, with the exception of Sts. Alban and Amphibalus, retain in these pages that precedence bequeathed to them by the Mother of our Lord, and which was made so impressive a feature in the chivalric legends of that ideal of Christian courts—the legendary court of King Arthur.

A contemporary of the proto-martyr, St. Helen, was of legendary but quite fictitious British birth. By her marriage with Constantius Chlorus she became the mother of Constantine the Great. With him, and through his imperial power, she was the first to encourage the building and beautifying of shrines, and was herself diligent

in such works. St. Helen died at Rome, and her ashes were enclosed in a porphyry urn, said to be the largest and richest in the world, which shrine is now preserved in a gallery of the Lateran. Notker, abbot of Hautvilliers, in the diocese of Rheims, in 1095 wrote an account of the translation, in the year 849, of the relics of this saint from Rome to that abbey, with all the attendant pomp.

The shrines erected to the honour of the women saints of the British Isles, though not so numerous as those to prelates and kings, were numbered among the most popular in the land.

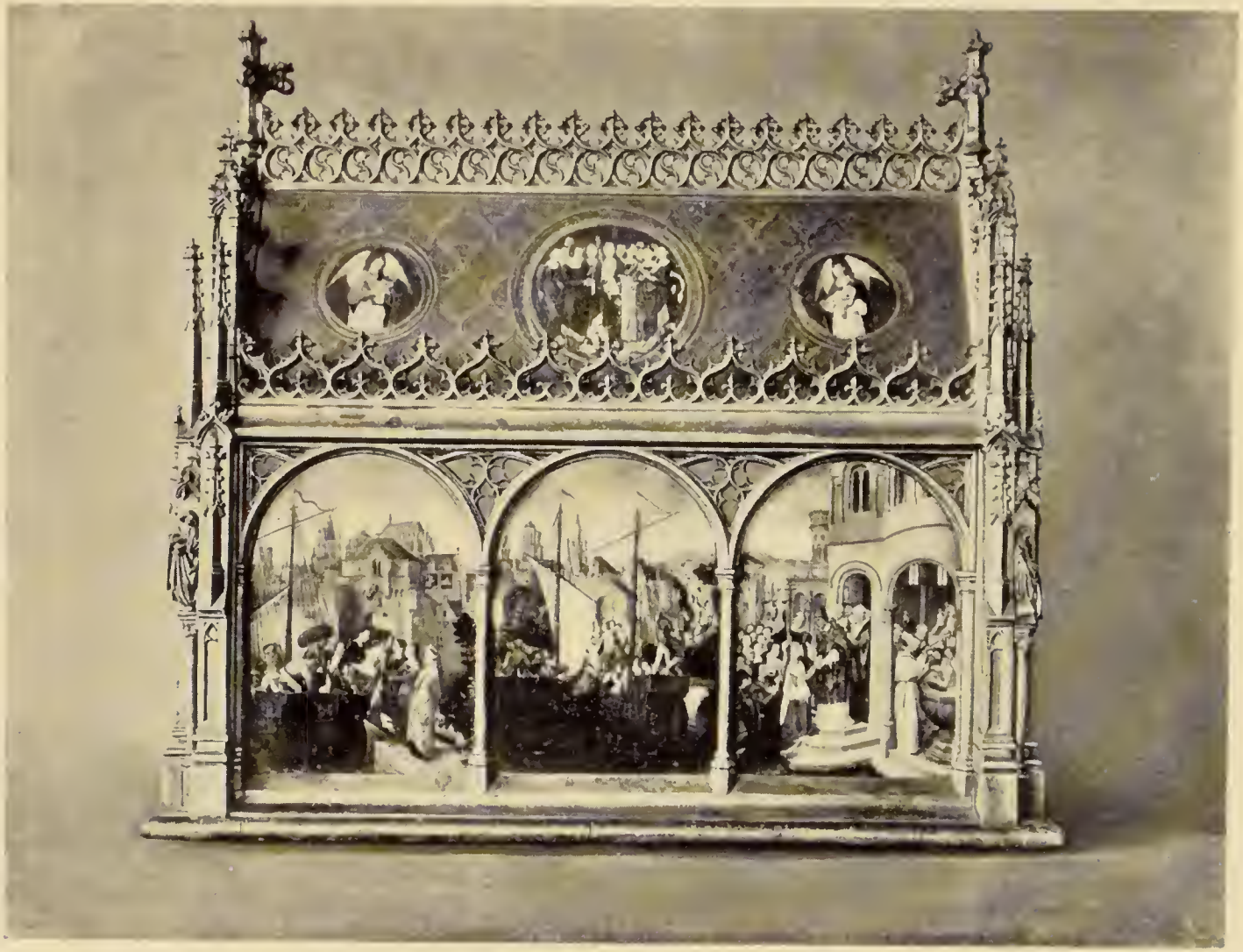
ST. MELANGELL

The remains of the shrine of St. Melangell have recently been discovered at Pennant Melangell, county Montgomery, in Wales. A large number of sculptured fragments are built into the walls of the church and the lych-gate, from which Mr. Worthington G. Smith has made a conjectural restoration of her shrine. Four beautifully sculptured capitals of Celtic workmanship were found, in addition to various slabs enriched with graceful foliated scrolls in low relief. The whole structure, as restored, is over 8 feet in height. This was the monument above the grave of the saint, and possibly beneath the stone vault stood one of those exquisite coffers of enamelled copper containing certain relics of the noble Irish maiden.

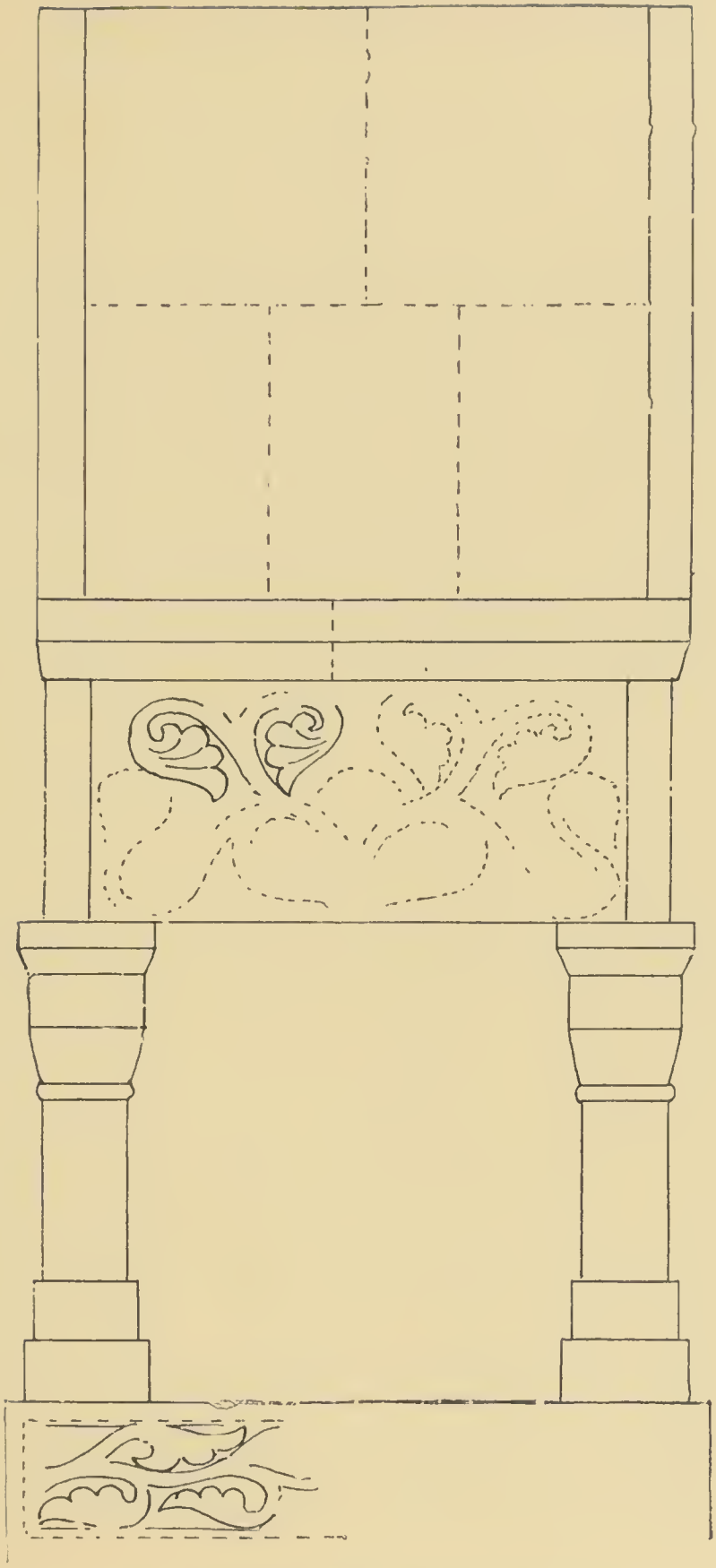
At the east end of the church is a small rectangular chapel still called "Cell-y-Bedd," the Cell of the Grave, in which the shrine formerly stood.

ST. MARGARET

Passing from the land of the Welsh to that of the Picts, we find the royal St. Margaret of Scotland had a magnificent shrine in the abbey church of Dunfermline, a resort



CHÂSSE OF ST. URSULA, AT BRUGES



SHRINE OF ST. MELANGELL (side elevation)

By kind permission of Mr. J. Romilly Allen

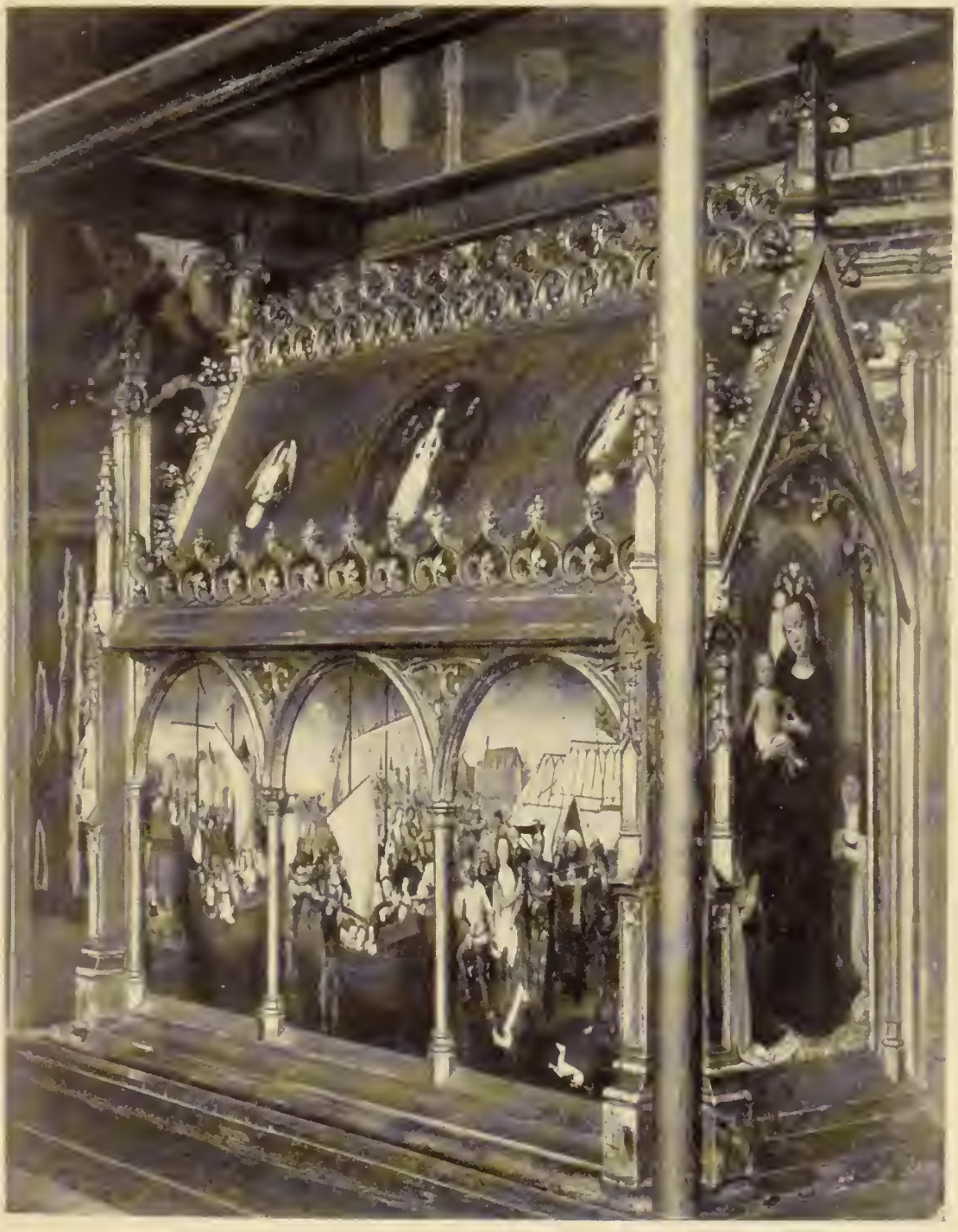
of countless pilgrims. In its shadow many of the royal line of Scotland found a tomb. At the Reformation her relics were privately removed to escape a sacrilegious mob who gave vent to their lust of destruction under the cloak of religion. The head of St. Margaret was carried to Edinburgh to Queen Mary Stuart, but after her flight into England it was taken to Antwerp by a Benedictine monk in 1597, who afterwards gave it to the college—afterwards the mitred abbey—of Douay, in which church it is enshrined in a silver reliquary. The rest of her relics were taken to Spain, where King Philip II. built a chapel in the Escurial Palace in her honour, which contains her shrine. In the same shrine are enclosed the bones of her husband, King Malcolm, whose name is enrolled among the saints in some of the Scottish calendars.

ST. URSULA

Of all the shrines fabricated for the relics of English saints—and for a woman—the châsse of St. Ursula stands pre-eminent. It is not a high marble structure or a bejewelled coffer, but a feretory of wood, the panels of which are decorated with the wonderful miniature paintings of Hans Memling illustrating scenes in the life and passion of the British Virgin.

Through being made and kept in a foreign country, this beautiful shrine has been preserved through all vicissitudes. St. Ursula and her companions—whatever their number may have been—fled from the importunities of a British prince, seeking shelter, and receiving the crown of martyrdom in an alien land. The brethren of the Hospital of St. John, in Bruges, gave directions for the making of her châsse in 1480, and it was finished in 1486.

The scenes depicted in the side panels are: the landing of St. Ursula at Cologne, in the background of which



SHRINE OF ST. URSULA

certain buildings of that city are represented; the quay at Basle; the Pope receiving the saint at the door of a church; the Pope accompanying the virgins on their return to Basle; the assault of the barbarians on the virgins and their escort on the banks of the Rhine; and the martyrdom. On one of the gabled ends St. Ursula throws her protecting mantle around some of her companions, and in the other she receives the veneration of two nuns. On either side of the roof are three medallions illustrating the coronation of the Virgin and the apotheosis of St. Ursula with four attendant angels (see Plates XIV. and XV.).

ST. LEWINNA

Of the shrine of another British saint—St. Lewinna—who was martyred between the years 680–690, we have no description of either form or decoration, but from a remarkable account of spoliation there is no doubt that it was a feretory of wood.

St. Lewinna had been buried in the church of St. Andrew, somewhere in Sussex, probably in the town of Lewes. Her reputation became so great that her bones were taken up and enshrined in a chest, and the miracles attributed to her were recorded on scrolls of parchment which were fixed to the walls.

There was in the monastery of Berques, in Flanders, near Dunkirk, a monk named Balgerus, who had made frequent voyages to England for the sake of obtaining relics. In the year 1058 this monk—as is related by Drogo, a contemporary and fellow-monk of Balgerus—again shipped for England; but a storm drove them past Dover, their intended port, until at last they found refuge in a harbour which, from his description, was evidently Newhaven. Balgerus made his way to St. Andrew's, where, after service, he examined everything in the church

and heard of the fame of St. Lewinna, by which he was inflamed with the wish to take away some relic of the saint's body. Drawing aside the parish priest he is reported to have said, "Ask what you please, and give me the relics of so great a virgin, either a bone or some other portion, which may do honour to my own monastery." The priest was exceedingly angry at such insolence and told him that he who could make such a proposition was a dishonest man. The monk was confused at the reproof and tried to pass it off as a joke. "I am in sport," he replied, "I did not speak seriously; all I really want of you is to allow me to hear Mass and to pray here at my leisure while I stay." The unsuspicious Saxon priest made answer, "The church is open to everyone, the door will not be shut on your account"—a lesson yet to be learnt by many English clergy.

Then follows a curious description of the gradual development of the schemes of Balgerus, to obtain by theft that which he failed to purchase.

Drago describes how Balgerus, while chanting and praying, glanced obliquely at the coveted shrine; from looking he came to handling it. He then discovered a way of opening the chest—quite accidentally—by drawing out the iron nails in a certain manner, so as to disclose to view the bones wrapped in a red cloth. Alarmed at his own temerity, guilt making him a coward, he replaced everything and resumed his prayers *that heaven would direct him when and how to carry off these relics.*

The following day the doorkeeper (*ædituus*) told him that he was going elsewhere, and would leave the church to his care, hoping that he would stay until the evening. "Go away, my friend," said Balgerus, "where you please; I will remain on guard to keep things as anxiously as yourself." Thus finding himself alone he approached the shrine more boldly and tried to lift it up, but he could

neither move nor raise it, it seemed to be rooted to the spot. A sudden horror seized him. Surely this was a sign of divine displeasure, for previously he could move it with ease. He renewed his prayers and began to chant through the whole Psalter until the fourth hour of the day, when he thought he would try again. He took a leathern strap and placing it round his neck fastened the two ends round the shrine. He then ejaculated, "Accept me, O venerable virgin, as your perpetual servant; only suffer yourself to be moved and carried to where you may be exalted to greater honour." He again applied his trembling hands, and the chest at once moved. Delighted with his success he solemnly adjured the saint not to allow herself to be stolen unless his faithful theft was destined to be undetected; he then continued to the end of the Psalter, when he quietly fell asleep.

In this sleep St. Lewinna appeared to him and told him to take her as his companion.

Before he was fully awake he thought he heard a noise, and imagined it was the return of the doorkeeper; but after searching all over the church and finding no one, his courage returned, and he proceeded to open the chest and wrap the bones in a linen cloth he had with him. In doing so a few small bones fell through a hole in the cloth, and although he picked them up three times they again fell. By this the saint clearly indicated that some of her relics should be left in that place where she had been martyred and buried.

Balgerus carried off as many of the bones as the saint permitted to his inn, and placing them in a box sent it down to a ship, but remained himself to disarm suspicion.

During the night a storm arose, which, although in harbour, threatened the safety of the vessel. The sailors thought it was caused by the presence of the stolen relics, and suggested casting them into the sea.

In the meanwhile, says Drogo, our faithful thief—nay, our good robber—passed a troubled night, until the saint in a vision comforted him with promises of a fair voyage. In the early morning he returned to the ship and they put to sea.

Later in the day the monk heard the sailors complaining of the hard and dry bread which was their only food, and he suggested that while they were only coasting he should land and buy some fish. He landed in a small boat and made his purchase, but as the boat was returning he saw the wind fill the sails of the vessel, and to his mortification it sailed away with his precious relics. "Farewell! farewell!" he piteously cried, "I am clearly unworthy to accompany you, my pious virgin, but may you have a prosperous voyage."

In course of time Balgerus reached his monastery at Bergue, when he found that although the ship had arrived the relics had been given to the care of the captain of another vessel, and it was only with great difficulty he regained them.

At length the relics were brought to their intended resting-place, and a feretrum adorned with gold and silver was prepared, into which Bishop Bovo translated them. First washing them with the choicest wines he then wrapped them in two cloths.

The chest was securely nailed down on every side "lest any fraud might possibly be practised, and any portion of the relics taken away."

Among the many miracles recorded was one at Lieswege, where some of the wood scraped off the saint's shrine and mixed with wine effected a cure.

Bergue rejoiced in the possession of these relics until the year 1522, when the shrine was destroyed and the relics burnt, only one rib bone being saved.

Shorn of its fabulous accretions this account of an

audacious robbery, condoned by the ecclesiastical superiors of the thief, who in the eyes of his fellow-brethren became a hero, is but one of many similar deeds. Foreigners must not receive the sole blame; such thefts were common among the "religious" of this country. Such acts influenced the locality of a shrine and were largely responsible for the increase in the number of reliquaries.

ST. ETHELDREDA

Mid the ranks of sainted women one family—of whom St. Etheldreda is the most revered representative—shed a halo from the dreary fenland throughout England, and the reputation of Ely, in this respect, equalled Glastonbury.

After the death of the Abbess Etheldreda in 679 she was buried, by her own desire, in a wooden coffin in the common cemetery at Ely, among the graves of the nuns. Sixteen years after, her sister Sexburga, who had succeeded in the rule of the convent, determined to take up St. Etheldreda's bones, place them in a stone coffin and translate them into the church.

Some of the monks were accordingly sent in a boat to find a stone large enough for the purpose, as there was nothing available on the isle. When they reached the abandoned Roman city of Grantchester, near Cambridge, they found, outside the ruined walls, a white marble coffin most beautifully wrought, and covered with a lid of the same kind of stone. Concluding that God had prospered their journey by placing this in their way, they returned thanks to Him and conveyed it back to the monastery, where it was received as "a divine gift."

A pavilion was erected over the grave for the exhumation, and when the wooden coffin was opened the body of the saint was found to be as free from corruption as though she had but just died.

The marble sarcophagus proved to be the required size in every respect; the place for the head particularly is mentioned by Bede as being shaped to a nicety. This translation took place on October 17th, 695. The sarcophagus was not buried in the earth, but was raised above the pavement of the church.

In 870 the devastating Danes invaded Ely, and supposing the marble chest to contain treasure, one of them with repeated blows cracked the stone cover, when—according to the *Liber Eliensis*—his eyes immediately started out of their sockets. No one else dared to touch it and the dust of the saint remained undisturbed.

When Canute, the king, visited Ely, his queen Emma gave a purple cloth worked with gold and set with jewels, to adorn the shrine—a wonderful piece of work for those days. Thomas the chronicler, a monk of Ely, declares that none other could be found in the kingdom of the English of such richness or beauty of workmanship.

At the building of the new choir by Abbot Richard, it became necessary to remove the shrine, and—on the feast of the former translation—in 1106, with great pomp the marble shrine, the disused coffin of some old Roman magnate, consecrated by over four centuries of pilgrimages, was solemnly moved to a position behind the high altar. At the same time were translated the bodies of St. Etheldreda's sainted relatives and successors. The shrine of her sister, St. Sexburga, was placed eastward, at her feet; St. Ermenilda, her niece, on the south side and St. Werburga—the daughter of St. Ermenilda—on the north side.[1] Thus was St. Etheldreda surrounded by a fitting escort of saints of her own family.

The relics of the three latter saints were found in various states. The bones of St. Sexburga were discovered wrapped in silk, and the dust of her body laid in

[1] *Lib. Elien. MS.*, lib. ii. cap. 144.

THE TRANSLATION OF ST. ETHELDREDA

A PAINTED PANEL IN THE POSSESSION OF THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES

a separate cloth of fine linen. These had been placed by Abbot Ethelwold of Abingdon in two wooden coffers, and both enclosed in one stone monument. The relics of St. Ermenilda were in an open grave beneath the pavement, without any covering but the flagstones; and the body of St. Werburga, together with her vestures, was found quite perfect, "indeed her body appeared as fair as though she had been but just dead."[1]

Now they were gathered around their kinswoman, whose "white marble sarcophagus" was considered so sacred, second only to the relics themselves. Of this Roman coffin we have, in all probability, a faithful representation. In the possession of the Society of Antiquaries is a fourteenth or early fifteenth century painted panel which, about a hundred years ago, was found doing duty as a cupboard door in a cottage at Ely, and had at one time evidently formed a portion of an altar-piece or retable in the conventual church. Four scenes in the life of St. Etheldreda are depicted, the last representing the placing of her body in the marble coffin, the sculptures on it being quite consistent with Roman design of the time of the occupation of Britain.

Around this coffin was built the outer case of the shrine, the decoration of which, from the wealth of jewels and the art displayed in its construction, must have made a gorgeous monument.

"Near the east end of the church is the shrine in which is enclosed the marble coffin containing the body of the Holy Virgin St. Etheldreda, towards her proper altar, where she now remains entire and uncorrupted in her tomb, prepared for her, as we believe, by angelic hands, as Bede, the learned writer of the English history, informs us. The part of this shrine which faces the altar is of silver, adorned with prominent figures, excellently gilt; round the glory are seven beryls and chrystals,

[1] *Anglia Sacra.*

two onyxes, and two Alemandine stones, and twenty-six pearls; on the crown of the glory are one amethyst, two cornelians, six pearls, and eight transparent stones; and on the four angles of the crown, four large chrystals; and in the circumference, nine chrystals; and in the corner towards the south is fixed an ornament of gold, with one topaz, three emeralds, and three sardines. In the crown of the upper image are seven precious stones and eleven pearls. There is also one pommel, which supports a crucifix of copper, well gilt, and adorned with twelve chrystals.

"The left side of the shrine is of silver, well gilt, adorned with sixteen figures in relief, fourscore and fourteen large chrystals, and with one hundred and forty-nine small chrystals and transparent stones.

"The east end of the shrine is also of silver, gilt in different parts, ornamented with images in relief, among which are two figures of lions, composed of chrystal, and set with thirty-two chrystals, three transparent stones, and eight emeralds, and seven middling nuts (*modiscis nuscis*); there is also one glory, which belongs to the frontal of the altar.

"In the south part are sixteen figures of silver without gilding, and the under moulding or border of silver gilt. In this compartment are twenty-six chrystals, and in this part is another round piece of copper, which also supports a crucifix of copper well covered over with gold; and before the altar is a table of silver gilt, and adorned with raised figures. This was made, by the Abbot Theodwyn, of the money found at Winteworth, after the death of Abbot Thurstan, on which, round the glory, are two chalcedonies and twelve stones, between chrystals and beryls, and eight stones and sixteen pearls are wanting, and round the glory are four figures of angels of ivory; and in the inmost silver border of this table are wanting twenty-eight stones. This table Bishop Nigellus broke, and also the shrine of S. Etheldreda, at the instigation of those who were enemies to the peace and welfare of the Church, and took away all the gold and silver that was on them, and embezzled it."[1]

[1] *Bentham's MSS.*

This defacement is also referred to by the author of *Anglia Sacra* :—

"Toward the end of the year 1144 Bishop Nigell was fined 300 marks by the king, and had to surrender his son as hostage until the fine was paid.

"To raise this money the bishop almost entirely stripped the shrine of S. Etheldreda, on which he had before laid great contributions. The silver he now took from it amounted to 124 marks, besides which, and the silver and gold which he tore from the table of the altar, or reredos as it is now commonly called, valued at 70 marks, he took two silver images and many other things from the various altars."[1]

The monks who did the Bishop's wicked bidding were said to have been afflicted with various ailments in consequence—one of them with a severe attack of gout.

The restoration was shortly taken in hand, for we find that—

"Bishop Geoffry Ridel in 1179 very elegantly repaired with silver the two sides and part of the covering of the shrine ; and Bishop Geoffry de Burgh in 1225 caused a great part of the silver of the shrine to be gilt, probably those parts restored by Ridel, and gave a very large and valuable piece of plate for an ornament on the upper part of it."[2]

On the 17th of September, 1252, the present church was dedicated, and into the presbytery, east of the high altar, St. Etheldreda and her three companions were again translated, together with the reputed relics of St. Alban,[3] in the presence of King Henry II. and his son.

In the year 1324 robbers broke into the sanctuary and stole from the shrine a large golden cross, which was said to have been the gift of King Edgar, besides many other articles of value. Robert de Bykeling was at that time the custodian of the shrine, and he, following the thieves

[1] *Anglia Sacra*, i. 622-6.
[2] *Harl. MSS.*, 258.
[3] *Ibid.* ; see St. Alban.

to London, was successful in recovering and restoring the treasures to the church.

Fifty-four years after this, the fourth and fifth bays of the triforium had their roofs removed, and the arcade glazed, by which a flood of light was shed upon the shrines in the middle of the presbytery.

The upper part of Bishop Hotham's tomb is supposed to have been the watching loft for the shrine.

Bishop Goodrich zealously carried out the injunctions of 1541 for the stripping of the church, and the shrines were totally destroyed.

It was not until recent years, when the Rev. Father Lockhart, a Passionist father, restored the desecrated chapel of the bishops of Ely, in Ely Place, London, that certain relics of St. Etheldreda were again enshrined. They now rest in a rectangular reliquary beneath the altar of that church.

ST. WERBURGA

In St. Werburga was centred the blood of the chief Saxon kings, but she discarded the fine linen and purple of the court for the coarse conventual habit, in the monastery of Ely. It would seem that she left the seclusion of that isle to found and supervise other religious houses ; but it is difficult to trace the actual facts. There is confusion between two saints of the same name, or between the records of the life of the same saint. Hagiologists have imagined the patron of Chester and the saint of Ely to be two saints with similar names, whilst others recognise the same individual with shrines to her honour in the two places. Following the latter supposition and the Ely MS., it appears that St. Werburga died, and was buried in the churchyard at Dereham. After many years her grave was opened, and her body was found to be as fair as when she had lain on the bier on the day of her

SHRINE OF ST. WERBURGH

AS RESTORED IN THE LADY CHAPEL BY THE VERY REV. J. L. DARBY, D. D.

death, her vestures untouched by decay, her hands crossed upon her bosom, and her little crucifix resting upon her breast. The holy relics were forthwith removed into the church, where the virgin manifested her sanctity by numerous miracles.

Towards the latter part of the ninth century, a part or the whole of these relics were carried to Chester, to escape the marauding Danes; if the latter, certain portions must have been restored to Dereham after the danger had passed.

The relics of St. Werburga at Chester were deposited in a feretory of silver, and the stately church, built specially to contain them, was actually a vast shrine to the honour of the saint.

"In the Abbay of Chestre she is shryned rychely"

runs a line in the metrical Life of St. Werburga, by John Bradshaw, a literary monk of Chester.

The repute of St. Werburga was great, her efficacy in working miracles unlimited, and in 1180 we find the feretrum was carried in procession through the streets of Chester for the purpose of staying a conflagration which threatened to consume the city.

By the mandate of Henry VIII. the abbey church was turned into the cathedral of Chester, and in that fane is still standing a part of the structural shrine of St. Werburga. Until recently a large portion of this shrine formed part of the bishop's throne; but when the present wooden throne was erected, the fragments that had been used in the episcopal chair, as well as other scattered pieces, were pieced together with some ingenuity, and re-erected at the west end of the Lady Chapel. The deficiencies were made good with plain stone, so that the remains of the old work can be readily identified. The lower part, with the figures, is ancient, and the portion

resting on this, as high as the small headless gilded figures, is modern; but the figures themselves are old, and formerly rested on the ancient base. The niches in front and at the sides of the base are arcaded, vaulted, and surmounted by foliated canopies. The old work is of the early Decorated period; and the gilded figures—holding scrolls, which probably were originally inscribed with their names—are supposed to represent the royal line of St. Werburga.

The good people of Dereham were devoted to the careful preservation of the relics of St. Werburga which were in their midst, when the pious King Edgar, to restore the fallen fortunes of the abbey of Ely, conferred upon it the village and church of Dereham. The abbot Brithnoth was desirous of translating the relics to Ely, but fearful that the inhabitants of Dereham would oppose the loss of their treasure, he decided to obtain it by stealth. He therefore made a visitation to his new possession attended by a number of his armed villeins; and after the administration of justice he bade the people to a great feast, at which he "filled them with wine." At night, when the company were sleeping away the effects of their carousing, the abbot—"God's robber" as he is called—"ready for this holy sacrilege, this faithful theft," opened the tomb, and taking out the coffin which contained the relics, bore it to a wheeled car which they had provided for that purpose. The servants from Ely surrounded the car, while others formed a rear guard, and thus they took their way to Brandon. In the meanwhile the men of Dereham awoke to discover their loss, and that they had been overreached by the artfulness of their suzerain lord. They roused the country with horn and clamour; the countryfolk, thinking it was an incursion of the dreaded Danes, assembled with bills and staves. In hot haste they followed the Ely thieves, but did not come in sight of the "Philistines" until the

relics of St. Werburga were embarked in the boats awaiting them on the Ouse. The pursuers lined both banks of the river and cast their spears at the lord abbot's party, until at last they had to give up the pursuit as hopeless. The abbot reached Ely in safety, and the relics of that saint who had taken the veil in their church, whose memory was yet treasured on that swampy isle as one of a family of saints enshrined within their holy precincts, were joyously welcomed to the strains of the *Te Deum*.[1]

Such was the translation on the 8th of July, 974, a day ever afterwards observed as a high festival by the monks of Ely until that convent was dissolved.

ST. OSANA

From an account given by Giraldus Cambrensis of an extraordinary miracle which is said to have occurred at Howden, in Yorkshire, we gain some idea of the design of the shrine of St. Osana, the sister of King Osred. There, it is said, the mistress of the parish priest sat down on the tomb of St. Osana, which projected like a wooden seat. To her chagrin and shame, when she wished to rise, she found herself immovably fixed on to the shrine, from which she was not released by the invisible power until she had received a severe chastisement for her immorality.

From this it would appear that a projecting base, the height of a bench, was provided for the pilgrims, similar to that remaining at St. David's shrine (page 92), and only found in the older types which were influenced by the British or Celtic church.

ST. FRIDESWIDE

St. Frideswide, of royal blood, built the church in Oxford, about 727, in which she was afterwards laid to

[1] *Liber Eliensis*, 164–7.

rest. This church is found to have terminated at the east end in three apses, somewhat in the same way as the plans of most of the Greek churches; and it is supposed that her first grave was in the chapel formed by the southern apse.

In the massacre of St. Brice's day in 1002, by which King Ethelred hoped to exterminate the Danes, this church was partly burnt,[1] but so great had become the reputation of the saint that the king made a vow to rebuild it, which, as can be seen from his charter, was accomplished in two years' time.

Ethelred appears to have left the body of St. Frideswide undisturbed, for it is stated that when he repaired and enlarged the old building, the tomb of the saint, which before was on the south side of the church, thereupon stood in the middle.

Then came a Norman restoration, and in the year 1180 the relics of St. Frideswide were translated "from an obscure to a more honourable place in the church" by the prior Phillip, who wrote a book, *De Miraculis St. Frideswyde.*

Anthony à Wood thus describes this translation :—

"After they were meet, and injoyned fasting and prayers were past, as also those ceremonies that are used at such times was with all decency performed, then those bishops that were appointed, accompanied with Alexio, the Pope's legate for Scotland, went to the place where she was buried, and opening the sepulchre took out with great devotion the remainder of her body that was left after it had rested there four hundred and eighty years, and with the sweet odours and spices imaginable, to the great rejoicing of the multitude there present, mingled them amongst her bones and laid them up in a rich gilt coffer, made and consecrated for that purpose, and placed it on the north side of the quire, somewhat distant from the ground, and enclosed it with a partition from the sight hereafter of the vulgar."

[1] William of Malmesbury.

At this solemnity the king, bishops, and nobles were present; then were wrought many miracles both on clergy and laity.

From the chartulary of St. Frideswide's we gather that a new shrine was being prepared about the year 1269.

(No. 347.) "John of Elsefend grants to the Prior and Convent of St. Frideswide a messuage at Oxford in St. John's Street on the north, between the land of St. John's Hospital and that of Walter of Lacheford, which messuage he specially gives and assigns to the fabric of the new shrine of St. Frideswide, rendering yearly to the Prior and Canons 7*d.* (3½*d.* at Michaelmas and 3½*d.* on Palm Sunday), and to St. John's Church 1½*d.* at Christmas for every service. For this grant the said Prior and Convent have given him beforehand three and a half marks of silver."

(No. 348.) "Geoffrey, goldsmith, of Oxford, promises and grants to the Prior and Convent of St. Frideswide the annual rent of 12*d.*, to be paid to the shrine of the said Holy Virgin, namely, 6*d.* at Easter and 6*d.* at Michaelmas."

This indenture is witnessed by John of Coleshulle, mayor, and others, which John was only once mayor of Oxford, and that was in 1269.

In 1289, on the Sunday next after the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin—September 11th—Prior Robert de Ewelme again translated the relics with all due honour into a new and more precious shrine, erected on the same site as the old one, which had been in preparation for several years. The Oseney Chronicle says it was placed *near* the place where the old one stood.

The coffer of precious metals, or feretory, which contained the relics is entirely lost; but some remains of the marble shrine on which the feretory rested have recently been discovered and pieced together.

At the former shrine, in 1264, King Henry III. had worshipped; to the last came Edward I.; and in 1518,

shortly before its destruction, Catherine of Aragon made a pilgrimage.

Twice a year, at mid-Lent and on Ascension Day, the Chancellor, the principal members of the University, and the scholars, came to the shrine in solemn procession to offer their gifts.

When the shrine was destroyed in 1538 all the offerings were conveyed into the King's Treasury, but the relics of the saint were rescued by some of the faithful and carefully preserved until better times.

In the meantime Catherine, the wife of Peter Martyr, a foreign Protestant, who had been appointed to the chair of Regius Professor of Theology, had died, and was buried near the site on which the shrine had stood.

During the reign of Queen Mary, Cardinal Pole sent letters to Dr. Marshall, Dean of Christ Church, to restore the devotion to St. Frideswide (November 7th, 1556). The dean then had the body of Catherine Cathie, or Dampmartin, the nun who had violated her vows and become the wife of Peter Martyr, exhumed and buried in the dunghill next his stable, where it remained about five years; and the relics of St. Frideswide were again exalted, though it does not appear that any attempt was made to rebuild her shrine.

As a counter-act to these proceedings Queen Elizabeth commissioned Archbishop Parker and Bishop Grindal of London to inquire into the matter, and they in turn issued instructions to the authorities of Christ Church to remove the scandal caused by this treatment of Catherine's body. To remedy one evil they committed the greater one of sacrilege. James Calfhill, the sub-dean, caused his servants to dig for Catherine's bones. When found the flesh had nearly perished and the bones were disjointed. These were brought within the church, and the 11th of January was appointed for the people to assemble for a great

function. On that day an oration was made in praise of Catherine, mingled with scoffs at St. Frideswide, whose relics, preserved in two silken bags, were then mixed with the bones of Catherine. After this gruesome proceeding, Calfhill sent a letter to Bishop Grindal, in which he states that the bones of the Protestant Catherine were so mingled with those of the saint that they could not be distinguished the one from the other, and placed in the same coffin.

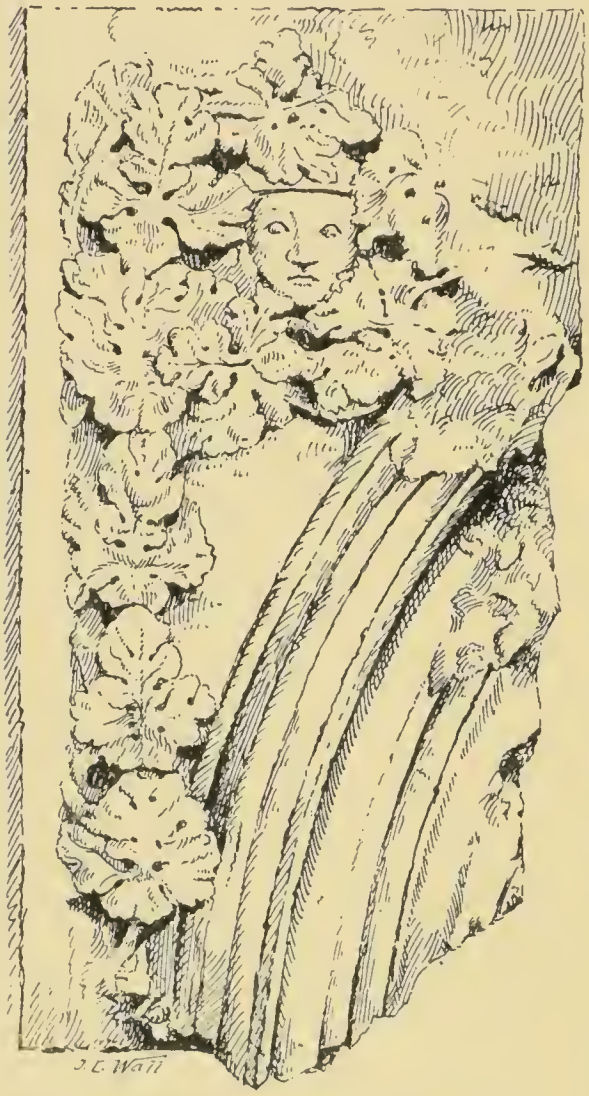
The spot where the relics of "The Lady" (as St. Frideswide was locally called) are now supposed to rest together with Catherine—"the married nun and the virgin saint," as Froude says—is marked by a brass placed in the pavement of the Lady Chapel by Canon Bright.

The marble structure of the thirteenth-century shrine on which the feretory rested has recently been largely reconstructed, far beyond the most optimistic anticipation; it proves to have been one of the great shrines, of similar design to that of St. Thomas Cantilupe at Hereford, and not unlike the shrines of St. Edward at Westminster or of St. Edmund at Bury.

In 1875 a square well was discovered outside the west end of Christ Church Cathedral, and among the stones with which it was lined were found many pieces of beautifully worked marble of the latter part of the thirteenth century. They had certainly formed part of a richly ornamented high tomb, and it was suggested that they might have belonged to that shrine of St. Frideswide which was built in 1259—a surmise which has proved correct.

The well had been sunk after Cardinal Wolsey had destroyed the five western bays of the priory church to make room for his great quadrangle—Tom Quad—and the fragments of the shrine were taken from their sacred use at an opportune moment to be utilised in the formation of

the well. These apparently uninteresting details become valuable as showing that the structure formed the shrine up to that date, and that the watch chamber was not—as some writers have asserted—used for that purpose; while if it had lost interest by ceasing to be the shrine, it would not have been doomed by the commissioners of Henry VIII. and the other spared.



SPANDREL OF THE SHRINE OF ST. FRIDESWIDE

The fragments of marble plinths and sculptured spandrels thus recovered were carefully preserved in the church, while search was made for other pieces.

Another length of plinth with moulded quatrefoils enclosing two queens' heads was found in use as a step, fortunately laid with the carved part on the under side; and Mr. Francis, the senior verger, afterwards found a corner spandrel in the east wall of the cathedral cemetery.

These pieces, with some smaller fragments which had been found during the restoration of the cathedral, were brought together, and although far from perfect, the base of the shrine was, in 1890, restored sufficiently to convey an accurate knowledge of its original appearance.

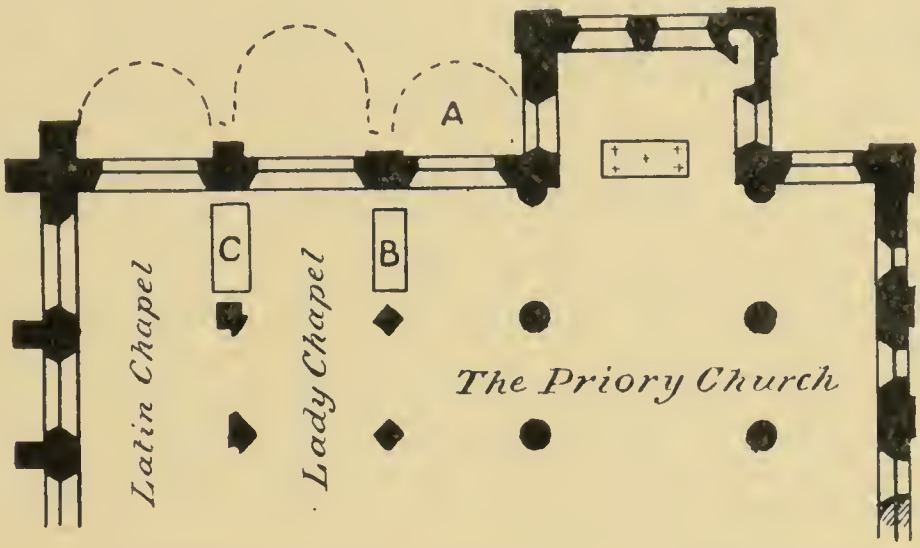
From the measurements of two perfect spandrels and a

SHRINE OF ST. FRIDESWIDE

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, OXFORD

complete length of the plinth, it was found that the total length had been nearly 7 feet, the width 3 feet 6 inches, and the height about 6 feet. At either side had been two trefoiled arches, each 3 feet wide, and a single arch at each end.

The position of this shrine in former times is not positively known. Wood could glean nothing from the chapter in his time, but thought it probably stood on the north side of the high altar of the priory church, which would also be the south of the nave of the Lady Chapel,



A. First place of sepulture. B. Shrine. C. Watch gallery.

and here it has been re-erected, for other evidence tends to confirm his decision. The shrine is short compared with its width, which would be accounted for if it stood beneath the arch of the arcade separating the nave of the Lady Chapel and its southern aisle; this would also explain the absence of the centre shaft of the half pillar against the east wall, which thus allowed a passage for the pilgrims.

On a Bath stone step, five inches in height, the original fragments of Forest marble have been built, the vacant places being filled with blue-stone which will be removed as other pieces of the shrine may be found, and the arches are supported by square stone pillars with plain capitals

and bases, so that they may not be mistaken for any part of the original monument.

The mouldings of the arches indicate a very early Decorated style, and the spandrels are filled with foliage very closely imitating nature.

On the north side the centre spandrel is sculptured with oak foliage, acorns, and cups, while some of the acorns are represented as having fallen from the cups into the label below. Among the leaves is a defaced human head. The half-spandrel to the east has ivy leaves and berries, amidst which is a linnet, but without its head; and the half-spandrel to the west is carved with maple leaves and pods.

On the south side the central spandrel has sycamore leaves and pods, while those at either side have celandine and columbine, a female head appearing in the latter.

At the east end of the shrine are the fig and vine; and at the west end white bryony and hawthorn with their berries.

The foliated cusps have oak leaves and acorns, and hogsweed. The labels terminate in bosses of oak leaves and water crow's-foot.

The mutilated face in the centre of the north side is in a conventual wimple, and is probably intended for St. Frideswide, while the two faces on the south side represent the two nuns Katherine and Cicely, who accompanied the saint when she fled from Oxford to escape the objectionable attentions of Algar of Leicester.

It is supposed that the various kinds of foliage so delicately sculptured on the shrine commemorate certain episodes in the life of the saint. The flight into the oak woods of Abingdon, the seclusion in the ivy-clad cottage of the swineherd, and her residence at Thornberie (now Binsey).

The maple, bryony, celandine, columbine, and water crow's-foot, which all have healing properties and are to

be found included in the old herbals, allude to the nursing of the sick to which St. Frideswide was devoted, for she had learnt the art of healing from her aunt, the Abbess of New Minster.

The quatrefoils of the plinth still contain the heads of four crowned queens on the south side, and of two saints on the north. At the angles are the heads of Edward III. and a bishop, and in the centre of the west end foliage is arranged in the form of a cross.

By the traces of colour and gilding which are still visible, the shrine must have presented a rich and gorgeous appearance—a fitting throne for the support of the relics of so famed a saint; and, as far as can be determined, differing in some respects from any other of the premier shrines of England.

ST. EANSWYTHE

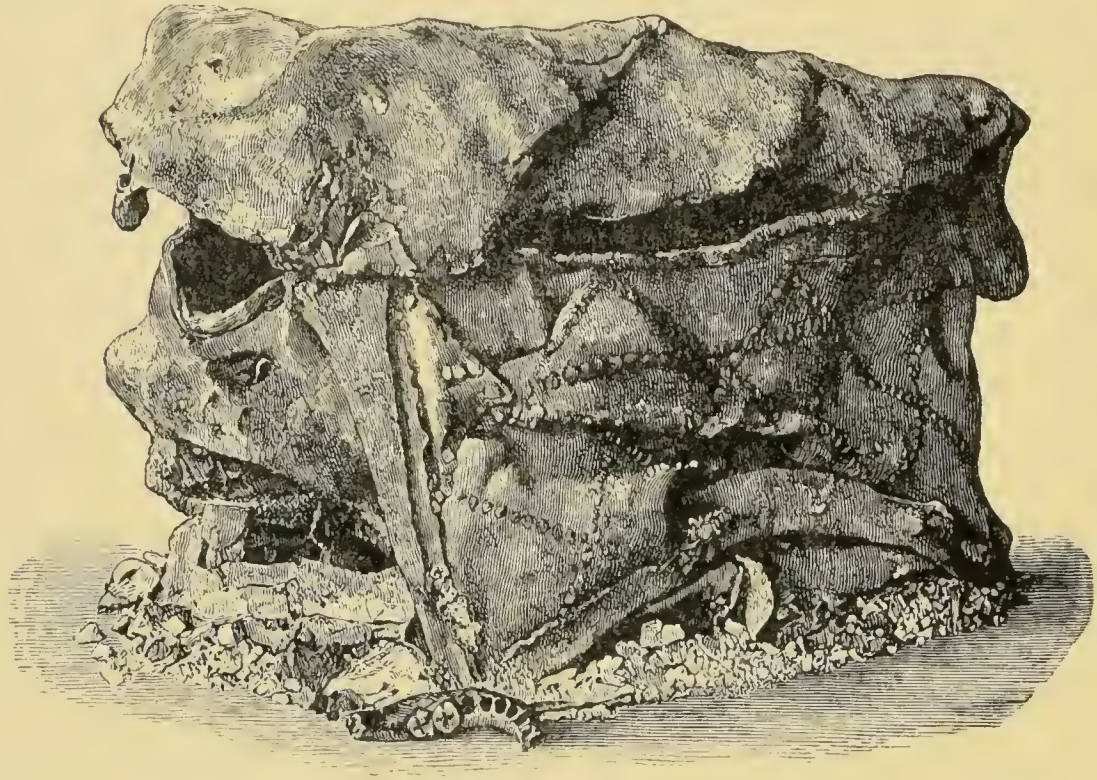
The parish church of Folkestone is dedicated to St. Mary and St. Eanswythe. The latter was the daughter of Eadbald, king of Kent, and therefore the granddaughter of St. Ethelbert, who gave St. Augustine the opportunity to spread the tidings of great joy which he had braved the perils of travel to propagate. Eanswythe, one of his converts, died at the early age of twenty-six years.

Local tradition asserted that her relics were still in the church in which pilgrims had formerly knelt around her shrine; but it was accepted only as of legendary worth, until in 1885, while workmen were engaged in preparing the walls of the sanctuary for the introduction of alabaster decoration, a niche was opened out in the south wall, and it was found to contain a leaden reliquary.

It was on the 17th of June that this coffer, with the Saxon maiden's relics, was again brought to light, after being safely preserved for three centuries and a half behind the protecting plaster.

The leaden coffer is 14 inches long, 9 inches wide, and 8 inches high without the lid. The cover had not originally been designed for this purpose, but was only a rough fragment of lead taken from some other vessel.

The outer surface of the casket is ornamented with lozenges formed by beaded or dotted lines, and near the top the lozenges are crossed by a horizontal line of similar dots.



RELIQUARY OF ST. EANSWYTHE, FOLKESTONE CHURCH
By kind permission of Messrs. Skeffington

In the interior were a number of bones, which were said by experts to be those of a young woman. One jaw-bone was almost perfect, with two double teeth still in position. Other teeth which were lying loose in the coffer were in perfect condition, and serve to confirm the genuineness of the discovery.

A new niche, lined with alabaster, was provided in the wall of the sanctuary for this twelfth-century reliquary, enclosed by a brass grille and a solid brass door.

ST. CANDIDA

Another recent discovery of a similar nature has been made in Dorsetshire.

In various ecclesiastical calendars a certain saint—or saints—obscurely known as White, Candidus, or Candida, is to be found.

Apparently there were five saints of that name, and the head reliquary of one has already been noticed as the earliest *chef* extant (p. 6).

One known by that name was venerated in the border neighbourhood of Somerset and Dorset, especially at Whitechurch-Canonicorum, the church of which is placed under the twofold invocation of St. Candida and the Holy Cross; but whether St. Candida derived her name from the place, or Whitechurch was called after the saint is not likely ever to be known. It has been suggested that this individual was one of the companions of St. Boniface, but the name being in the feminine form, that idea must be dismissed and her identity remain unknown.

During the winter 1899–1900 certain movements of the walls and pavement of the north transept of the fane at Whitechurch caused an ancient fracture in a twelfth-century coffin of Portland stone to considerably widen. This sarcophagus was locally attributed to St. Candida, and the necessary readjustment of the western end, in order to close the opening, was the means of confirming the truth of the legend.

On April 18th, 1900, the broken end of the coffin was removed from under the covering slab of Purbeck marble, when it was found that the interior was rectangular, the inside measurements being 6 feet 2 inches long, 1 foot 6½ inches wide, and 9 inches deep.

Within this chest was a leaden reliquary lying on one of its edges and tilted against the north side of the coffin.

Between this chest and the south side of the coffin lay many fragments of bones mingled with the dust of bones, wood, and lead. The larger fragments were reverently collected into a clean linen cloth, and the reliquary was carefully drawn out.

The leaden box measured 2 feet 5 inches long, 8 inches wide, and 8 inches high. On one side of it was an inscription cast in the lead in letters varying from five-eighths to seven-eighths of an inch in height :—

✠ Hic. Reqesct. Relique. Sce. Wite.

This inscription is 14⅜ inches in length, and on one end of the reliquary a portion of it is repeated :—

ct. Relique. Sce. W.

The reliquary has at some time received very rough usage, and is greatly damaged by having been violently torn open. By the incrustation of oxide on the jagged edges it is probable that it received this treatment in the sixteenth century.

Within were a large number of bones, which were not disturbed, but a thigh-bone which lay uppermost was found to be 13⅞ inches long. Two teeth (one molar and one incisor), quite sound, but considerably worn, were among the *débris* in the coffin.

The bones appeared to be those of a small woman about forty years of age, and if so they would agree with the sex indicated by the inscription.

The cloth containing the larger fragments of bone was laid within the reliquary, and a second cloth was drawn over all the contents, which were then replaced and the broken end of the stone coffin securely fixed with cement.

CHAPTER IV

SHRINES OF PRELATES AND PRIESTS

THE shrine of one priest—St. Amphibalus—has already received attention with that of his pupil and convert St. Alban, the first martyr of Britain. As the first ecclesiastic to receive the crown of martyrdom and the first cleric to be enshrined he, together with St. Alban, took precedence in these pages.

Of those prelates who were martyred since the early ages of the Church, England has yielded the most noteworthy in all Christendom. The death of Thomas à Becket thrilled Europe to an extent unsurpassed by anything except the preaching of the Crusades, and the events consequent on those expeditions, since the day on which the Holy Cross was discovered by St. Helen. Appalled by such an act, rejoicing at the moral triumph of the Church in her representative, and envious that England possessed that champion, each National Church coveted a similar honour. His name was more widely inserted in the Churches' calendars than any mediæval saint, his festival more generally observed, and his translation more fully attended.

Of clerics who were not elected to be martyrs England again has produced one of the most revered of names, and in St. Bede all Christendom recognises one of the venerable Doctors of the Church.

Thus raised above her fellows, how has England preserved her heritage?

The missionary labours of the early Celtic Church of the British Isles may be said to be unknown—certainly the extent of them is far from fully grasped even by the student of hagiology. When it is found that many shrines of the Celtic and Saxon prelates and clergy yet stand on the altars of the churches of obscure continental villages, to which their mission had carried them, venerated and known to the sparse population of those localities while forgotten by the descendants of their own countrymen, it may help this generation to realise the fervour of religion which inspired our simple forefathers. St. Bernard compared the missionary inundation of foreign countries by the Irish to a flood.[1]

St. Gobhan's relics are preserved in a shrine over the high altar of the church in a village called by his name—St. Gobain, near Laon; and the body of St. Etto (known in France as St. Zé) in his episcopal vestures lies enshrined at Dompierre.

Sts. Caidoc and Fricor (otherwise Adrian) were buried at Centule, now called St. Riquier, in Picardy. In 799 St. Angilbert restored their tombs, which he found in a half-ruined condition, and decorated them with an epitaph to each saint in letters of gold. Three hundred years after this they were more greatly honoured by St. Gervinus, who, in 1070, translated them to a shrine of silver and precious stones above the high altar of the same church, and in the same shrine laid the relics of St. Manguille.

St. Fursey, who, coming from Ireland, had spread the gospel through Suffolk, and founded the monastery of Burghcastle, passed over to minister to the spiritual wants of the French. Six miles north of Paris, at a place called Lagny, he built a monastery, and shortly after died at

[1] *Vita S. Mal.*, c. 6.

Mézerolles. Then ensued a contention for the body of the holy man. Erconwald, a noble who had been greatly influenced by the teaching of St. Fursey, sent an escort of soldiers to bring the body for interment to a church he was building at Péronne, in Picardy; but Haymon and the town of Mézerolles were loth to part with such a treasure. Legend says it was to be decided by yoking two untamed bulls to a car containing the coffin (a mode of decision said to have been at one time popular in England as well as abroad).[1] The bulls went to Péronne, but Bercharius, Count of Laon, came with superior numbers to seize the body, and it was eventually decided that it should depend upon the acts of two boys. The children raised the bier and carried it to Mont des Cignes, near Péronne.[2] They were met in front of the unfinished church by Erconwald, who relieved them of their precious burden.

The coffin was placed beneath a canopy of beautiful tapestry, within the porch, until the church was ready to receive it, and a watch was set to frustrate any attempt to carry it off. In twenty-seven days a place was prepared, and the coffin was buried near the altar.

Four years later—654—the relics were translated to a shrine made for them by St. Eloi, the great goldsmith of the Merovingian period, in a chapel to the east of the altar.

Another translation occurred in 1056, and in the new shrine then erected they remained until the Revolution, when the church was destroyed. The head reliquary was, however, saved, to suffer more grievously in the bombardment of Péronne by the Prussians in 1870, yet to escape destruction more marvellously. The face was recovered from the midst of the ashes of the church, enclosed in an envelope of crystal from the reliquary, which had been

[1] *Cf.* p. 31. [2] Colg., *Vita S. Fursæi*, ii.

melted by the action of the fire, and in its molten state had taken the impression of the face.[1]

The skull, still preserved in a head shrine, is thus inscribed :—

SACRÆ RELIQUIÆ SANCT. FURSAEI URBIÆ PERONENSIS PATRON.

At Luxeuil were numerous arm shrines and reliquaries of Sts. Columban, Eustace, Walbert, and others, until destroyed during the French Revolution.

The principal shrine of St. Columban stands as an altar in the crypt of the old Lombardic church dedicated to him at Bobio. It is a white marble sarcophagus, which was formerly surmounted by a statue of the saint. The front and sides are decorated with reliefs illustrating events in his life, and it is interesting to notice how in one of these the Polaire, Cumdach, or book satchel, carried by St. Columban, is represented.

The relics of another British saint—St. Judoc—were brought from the scene of his ministrations in Lower Picardy back to England. The Danes were threatening the village; and the natives, who had heard of the prowess of Alfred the Great, thought the body of the saint could find a safe asylum in England. They arrived at Winchester with their sacred burden almost on the eve of the dedication of the New Minster in Winchester. The canons gladly welcomed them and honoured St. Judoc with a glorious shrine in their church, which was made yet more beautiful when it was re-erected in Hyde Abbey.

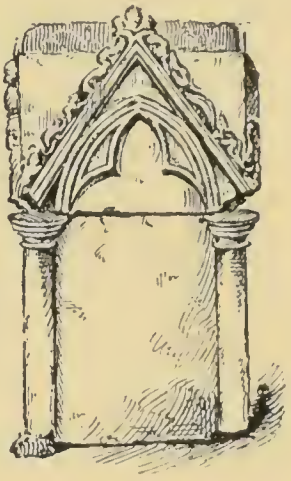
In a church just outside the village of Gheel, near Malines in Belgium, is enshrined the body of St. Dympna, the daughter of an Irish king of the seventh century; and an Irish reliquary, supposed to be that of St. Fridolin, is

[1] *The Conversion of the Heptarchy*, by the Right Rev. G. F. Browne.

preserved in the treasury of the cathedral at Coire, in the canton of the Grisons.

In the crypt of the ruined old cathedral at Fulda, Germany, is the shrine of the apostle St. Boniface; and in the sacristy are preserved his crosier of ivory, and the dagger with which he was martyred by the Frisians, in 754. But even England still possesses a minor shrine of this saint, which was discovered some years since in the ancient church of Brixworth, in Northamptonshire, in the south wall of the south aisle.

It is a stone reliquary of the fourteenth century, about 15 inches in height and 7½ inches in width. At the angles are small shafts with bases and capitals; three of the four sides are trefoil-headed panels with crocketed canopies. At each of the angles the mortice holes show that pinnacles originally decorated them. The top covers a cavity 4 inches in diameter and about the same depth, containing a bone of this English missionary.



RELIQUARY OF ST. BONIFACE

St. Willibrord of Northumbria was buried in 739 in his monastery at Epternacht, near Luxemburg, and there his shrine is exalted, to which the curious leaping pilgrimage is made every Whit-Tuesday.

St. Willibald has been revered in Aichstadt since the eighth century, and when Bishop Hildebrand built the new church in his honour, his relics were translated with great rejoicings; but a portion of his relics are enshrined at Furnes, in Flanders. St. Richard, king of the West Saxons, died at Lucca, and his relics are still venerated in the church of St. Fridian in that city.

Two of the ancient Irish feretories are yet extant, mutilated but beautiful, and in connection with one of them we are fortunate in having still preserved—but one solitary

example—the case or satchel in which the shrine was kept.

It was the general custom for the Irish to carry their smaller shrines and books in satchels (called *Menister* for the former, and *Polaire* or *Tiaga* for the latter), a custom yet observed in some parts of the Eastern Church.

Three satchels only are known to exist in the British Isles: one for the shrine of St. Moedoc, one for the Book of Armagh, and one for a missal now at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. With the first only are we now concerned as being connected with the shrine of St. Moedoc.

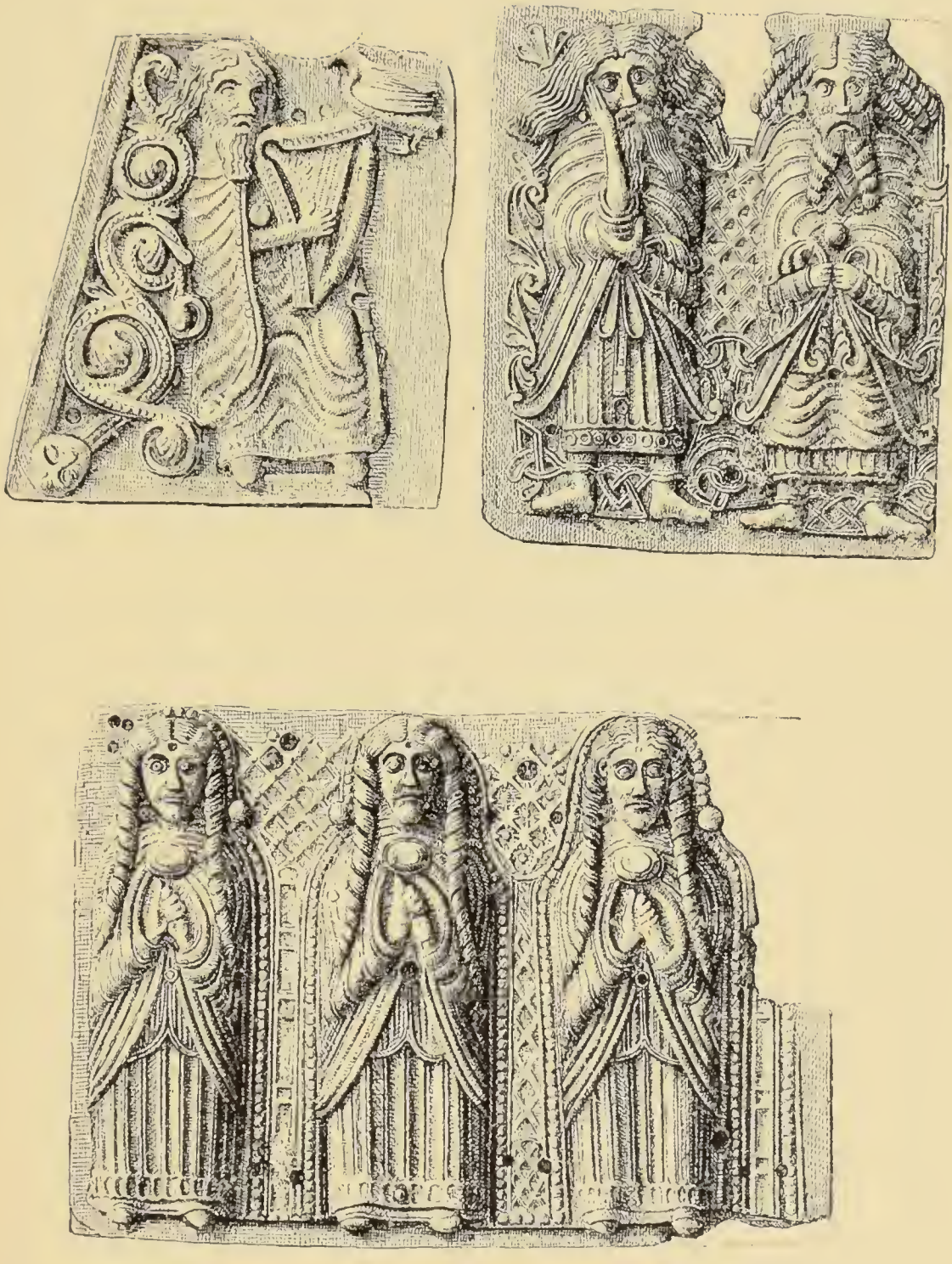
ST. MOEDOC

The Breac Moedoc, or shrine of St. Moedoc, is probably of the ninth or tenth century, and is mentioned in an Irish MS. Life of St. Molaise of the thirteenth century, now preserved in the library of the Royal Irish Academy.

It has been suggested that the name of this shrine was originally the *Bracc Moedoc*, which prefix was an ancient Irish word for *hand*, thus meaning that it was the shrine of St. Moedoc's hand. A thirteenth-century legend states that it was brought from Rome by St. Molaise, and by him given to St. Moedoc; but this is absolutely contradicted by the workmanship of the shrine.

Whether it contained a hand or any other relics of the saint in no way affects the fact of its being the shrine of St. Moedoc, the founder of the monastery of Ferns in the sixth century.

The shrine of St. Moedoc had been preserved for many centuries in the church of St. Moedoc at Drumlane, where it was in the custody of the Roman Catholic parish priest. The shrine was sometimes lent for swearing upon at trials, and so great was the reverence felt for it that an oath made upon it was most sacredly kept. About 1846 it



SHRINE OF ST. MOEDOC

DETAILS OF THE ORNAMENTATION

From the Archæologia, Vol. XLIII

was lent to a man named Magauran from the parish of Templeport, who deposited the usual pledge of one guinea for its safe restoration. Tempted, however, by the offer of a Dublin jeweller, he sold it to him instead of restoring it to the priest. Dr. Petrie bought it of this jeweller, and it is now in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy.

The Breac Moedoc is of the usual form of this kind of reliquary, a rectangular casket with a gable roof. The length is $8\frac{7}{8}$ inches, the breadth $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and the height

SHRINE OF ST. MOEDOC

$7\frac{1}{4}$ inches. The body of the châsse is of pale bronze covered with gilt plates. On the front were originally twenty-one figures in relief, only eleven of which remain, and the feet of three others. These figures are made in groups of three, and each group is differently treated in detail from the others. The first group at the base is surrounded by intertwined ribbons, and in the second group the figures are divided by the conventional birds so frequently seen in Scoto-Celtic art. The figures hold books, swords, and other symbols. In the next row

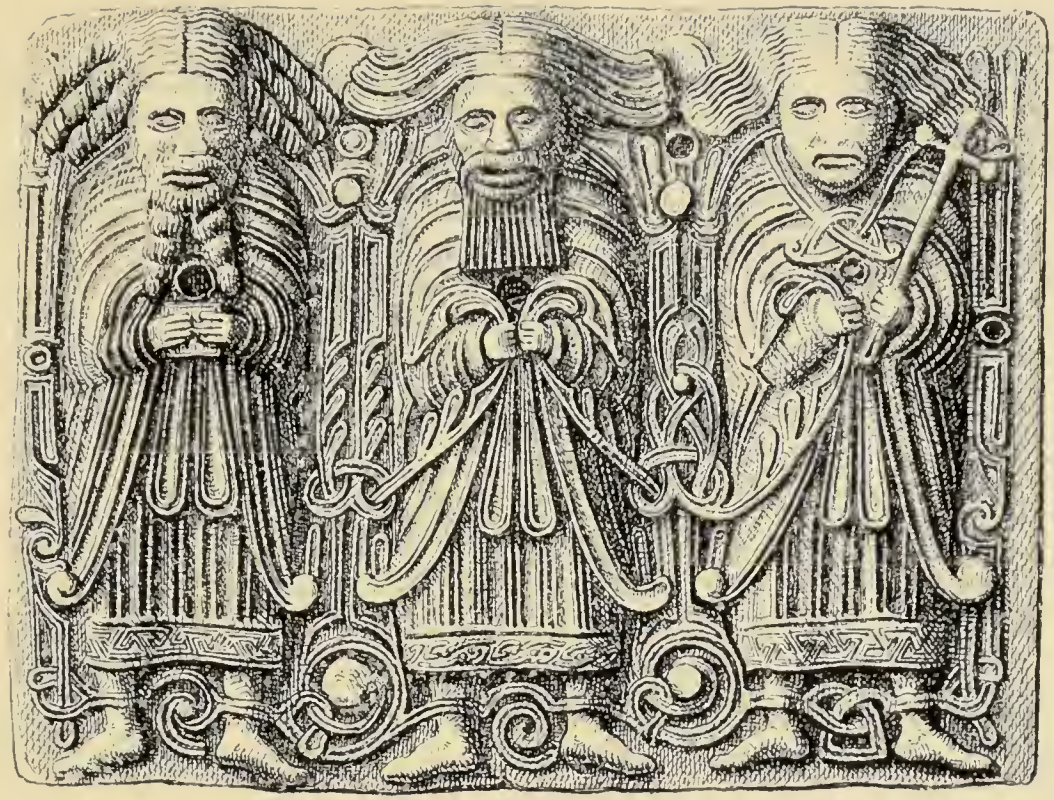
stand three female saints in a diapered arcade, all of whom have their hair dressed in one fashion.

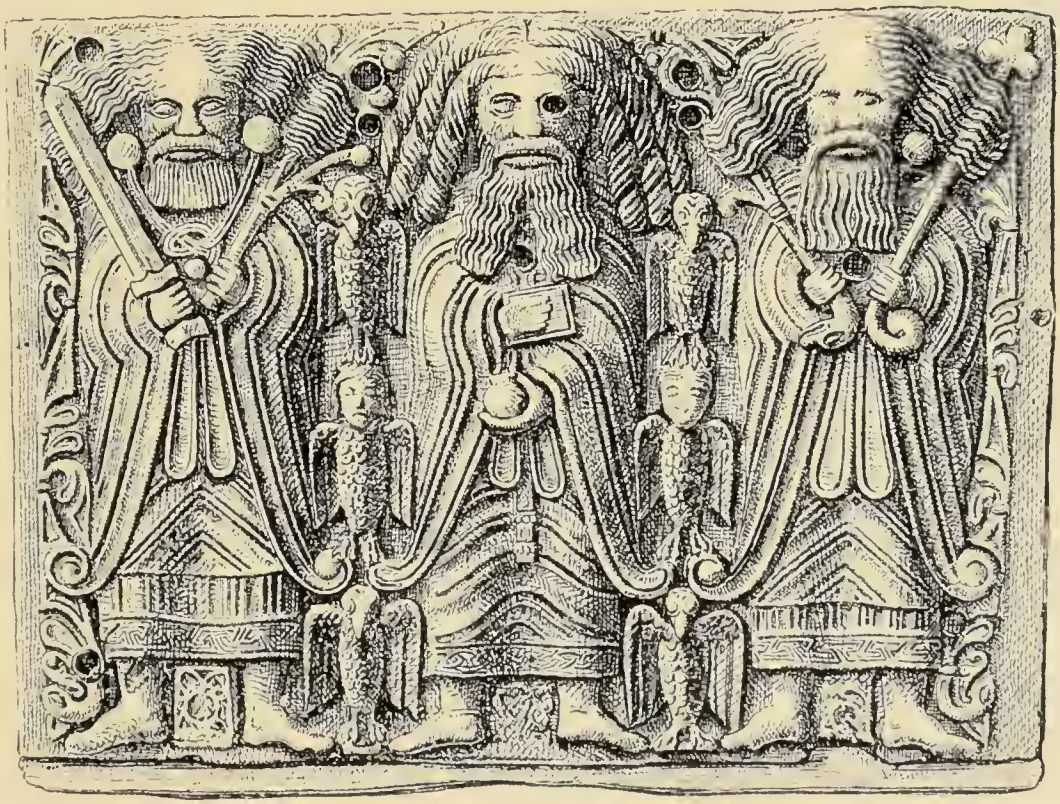
The ornaments have been torn from the ends, except one figure of bronze gilt, representing David seated and playing on a harp, while a dove hovers close by. This fragment also retains a small portion of Celtic scroll-work.

CUMDACH OF THE BREAC MOEDOC

The back and bottom of the shrine are decorated with a parallelogram of small crosses pierced through a plate of bronze. A fragment of the border of the base remains, and has a ground of red enamel ; the margins, knots, and squares are of gilded bronze, the pattern within the squares being formed of blue glass and red and white enamel.

The invaluable case, or satchel, in which the shrine was carried through the province of the clan, or the district of the patron saint, is provided with a broad leathern





SHRINE OF ST. MOEDOC

DETAILS OF THE ORNAMENTATION

From the Archæologia, Vol. XLIII

strap by means of which it was suspended round the neck. The satchel is of leather, and the whole of the ornament of interwoven bands with a central line, and of circles with a beaded decoration, is obtained, not by stamping, but by very shallow carving of the leather.

This one example, combined with written records, enables the imagination to grasp the progress of a Celtic bishop. St. Patrick is described as being followed by the boy Benen with his satchel on his back, and among the presents given by that saint to St. Fiacc was a *cumdach* containing among other things a reliquary.

ST. MANCHÁN

The other Irish example is the shrine of St. Manchán, or Managhan, which still contains the supposed relics of a saint of that name—but of which particular Saint Manchán is doubtful. Whether, in fact, it was the actual name of a saint, or whether it is a diminutive of *Manach*, *Monachus*, a monk, is difficult to decide. Many were the holy monks of the seventh century in Ireland, and a "Saint Manchán" is commemorated on various days in different martyrologies.

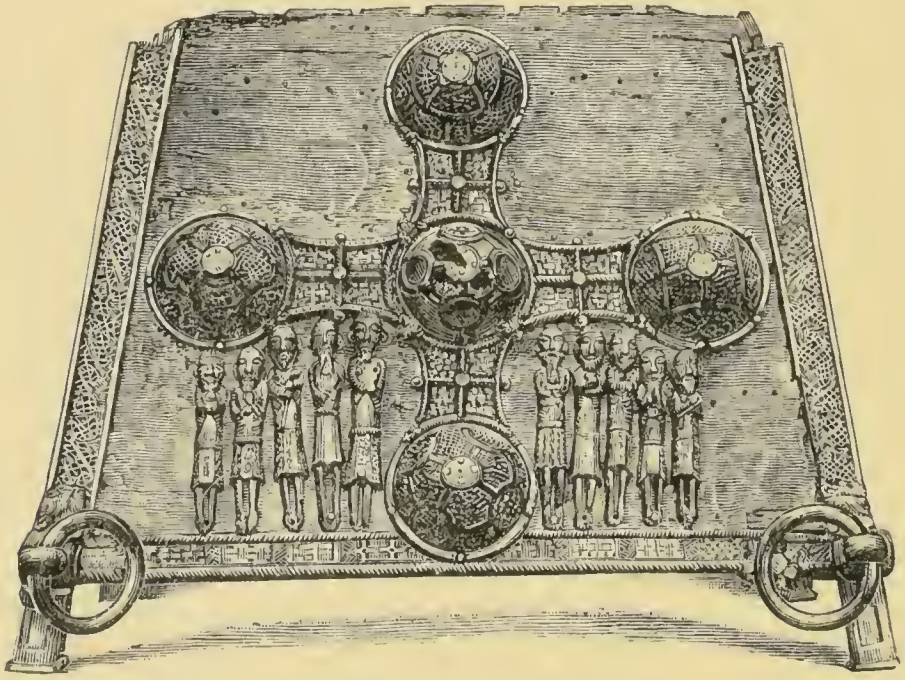
The saint whose relics are preserved in the shrine now to be described was probably the Abbot of Leith, in King's County, whose death, Colgan records, occurred in 664.[1] In the Annals of the Four Masters, under the year 1166, it is chronicled that "the shrine of Manchan, of Mæthail, was covered by Ruaidhri Ua Conehobhair (Rory O'Connor, King of Ireland), and an embroidering of gold was carried over it by him in as good a style as a relic was ever covered in Ireland."

This description closely agrees with both the age and the art of the reliquary now preserved on the altar of a

[1] *Fasti Hib.*, i. 150, 333.

chapel at Boher, in the parish of Lemanaghan, in which district stand the ruins of Leith Abbey where St. Manchán presided over his community, and after whom the parish is named.

Saved from iconoclastic zealots the shrine was long kept in a small thatched building, used as a chapel until it was destroyed by fire, when local tradition asserts that the reliquary was miraculously preserved, it alone being saved unhurt while all else was consumed. It was then placed in the custody of the ancient family of Moony of



SHRINE OF ST. MANCHÁN

the Doon, to whose residence the peasantry resorted to take oath on the shrine; but through the inconvenience thus caused it was translated to the church, and remains in the care of the parish priest.

The shrine, or feretory, has a rectangular base 23 inches long by 12 inches wide, from which the sides rise without a break to a gable 19 inches high. It is supported by four feet 2 inches in height, which follow the rake of the

sides. The two ends are thus of triangular form. The framework is made of yew, which is yet quite sound.

The base of the shrine is surrounded by a border of bronze 1¼ inches wide, ornamented by a *tau* pattern of champlevé enamel, between which is engraved a chevron design. The sides have borders of bronze 1½ inches wide, the edges of which are hammered up into cable mouldings, and the flat central bands are filled with a continuous pattern of intricate animal interlacings, pierced through the metal and exposing the timber beneath. On both of the sides is a large cross 18 inches in width and 17 inches in height ; at each extremity and in the centre is a large raised boss, 4½ inches in diameter and 1½ in relief, all enriched with interlaced lacertine ornament, except the two central, which were probably enamelled. The arms of the crosses are each composed of four enamelled plates ; the ground of the enamels is yellow with a border of red lines. Above and below the crosses were originally about fifty-two figures, sixteen below and ten or twelve above the cross on each side ; the figures are in high relief and were heavily gilt, but being fastened to the background by nails of bronze, many of them have fallen away, only ten remaining, all of which, by their vestures, are apparently laymen, mostly warriors. They are habited in close-fitting tunics with an outer covering with sleeves ; a girdle encircles the hips, and from it falls a richly embroidered philibeg, or kilt. The legs and feet are bare. The hair and beard are variously trimmed, and one figure appears to have a steel cap. Four of the figures bear distinctive emblems—one carries an axe, another a book, and two others have short swords.

Two other figures of the same elongated form have been found in the neighbourhood, which from their size and style probably belonged to the shrine of St. Manchán. One of them, with a richly chased conical helmet covering

the head and neck, is evidently a chieftain. The other is unmistakably in sacerdotal vestments; the head is covered by a cap, or primitive mitre, and over a short alb is a chasuble of the same length; in his hands he grasps a short *cambutta*, or pastoral staff, and his feet are covered with buskins.

The ends of the shrine are surrounded by borders similar to the sides, but the panels within them are sunk about half an inch and are each covered by a plate of bronze, the entire surface of which is enriched by beautiful interlaced work, divided into two compartments by an elongated monster, which is riveted down to the plate.

The crest of the shrine is lost, and with it probably the names of the donor and artificer, which in Irish work so frequently found a place on the joint production of their combined riches and skill.

Above the feet of panelled bronze are heavy clamps of the same metal, fastened to each corner and ornamented by heads of grotesque monsters; these clamps hold rings—3½ inches in diameter—through which staves were inserted when the feretory was carried in procession.

The whole of the metal-work was richly gilt, and although but little remains—partly through age, and largely through the pious energy of a former priest's servant, who, in her enthusiastic veneration for St. Manchán, so vigorously scoured the shrine to the detriment of its beauty—there is enough to realise how it must indeed have appeared to have "an embroidery of gold carried over it," and to deserve the description by the compilers of the *Martyrology of Donegal*, even as late as the early part of the seventeenth century, "a shrine . . . beautifully covered with boards on the inside and with bronze outside them, and very beautifully carved."

When the shrine was somewhat recently opened it was found to contain certain bones and the greater portion of

a skull, some pieces of yew and thin pieces of silver; the latter were evidently fragments of the plating of the sides of the shrine which had fallen away when the figures had become detached, and thus ceased to hold them in position.

ST. PIRAN

Following in the footsteps of those Irish saints who crossed to Britain, we find it was left for the present age to violate and destroy the simple shrine of St. Piran, which was for centuries preserved beneath a protecting pall of sand. Without even the excuse of sixteenth-century fanatics did the enlightened nineteenth century desecrate the relics of one of the apostles of England: not from religious motives—these have been conspicuously absent—but for the fleeting desire of possessing curios, without even the condoning wish to preserve them, was the painful sacrilege committed. As a place of picnic, to eat a sandwich while seated on the stone which covered the bones of the saint, to kick the fragments yet smaller, and to make a cockshy of the sacred remains, has been the sole ambition of many latter-day *pilgrims*;[1] reverting to a state more pagan than those to whom St. Piran came with the glad message of a Saviour.

St. Piran left Ireland for Cornwall with his mother and St. Ives to bring to the people of that small kingdom the gift he had himself received. On the north coast of Cornwall he built an oratory; there he taught, and there he died on March 5th, about 480.

The altar of that first oratory became his shrine, for he was buried beneath the altar stone, and when in the tenth century the shifting sands overwhelmed the church, the worshippers built another about a mile distant and carried the head of their saint to be enshrined in the new sanctuary.

[1] Scenes which the author has witnessed.

The second church was rebuilt in a larger and more perfect manner at the beginning of the fifteenth century, and in 1433 the will of Sir John Arundel, of Trerice, contained the following bequest:—

"Item, lego ad usum parochie S'c'i Pyerani in Zabulo ad claudendum capud S. Pierani honorifice et meliori modo quo sciunt xl.s."

(I bequeath for the use of the parish of St. Piran in Zabula xl. shillings—or about £32—towards enclosing the head of St. Piran with due honour, and in a better manner than heretofore.)

The Register at Exeter alludes to this spot as the resort of hundreds of pilgrims to the shrine of St. Piran.

At the period of the Reformation, when shrines were confiscated, there is reason to surmise—as will be seen hereafter—that the sacred relic of St. Piran's head was first reverently buried with his other bones in the forsaken primitive oratory.

Camden, who lived after this period, records:—

"In sabulo positum S. Pirano sacellum; qui sanctus, etiam Hibernicus, hic requiescit."

(In the sand a sanctuary was built by St. Piran, which saint, although an Irishman, rests here.)

The sands continually drifted, and in their irresistible course again exposed the gable of the first buried oratory. With an immense amount of labour that primitive church was dug out of its sandy robe, and in September, 1835, the shrine of St. Piran was again exposed to view.

The altar of the oratory was found to be placed in the position of a tomb, the length extending east and west, the east end abutting against the eastern wall. Beneath the altar slab were three headless skeletons, one was of a woman, probably the mother of the saint, who had accompanied her son in his self-imposed exile for the extension

of the faith. Lying between the leg bones of one of the skeletons were the three heads. These heads, it is supposed, had been again deposited in the original tomb for safety, in the sixteenth century, where it was known the other relics of St. Piran were buried.

Shame be to us that since this excavation the relics have been desecrated and lost, and the oratory nearly destroyed. The site has been surrounded in quite recent days by a protecting rail.

For the relics and shrines of British saints we have already found it necessary to look abroad. The Revolution in France was as destructive as the Reformation and the Great Rebellion in England; yet the relics of our saints have received more care in that country than in their native land. Foreigners imagine England to be "very religious"; but surely religion demands reverent treatment of the mortal remains of the temples of the Holy Spirit, whether of those commemorated in the Calendar or of those forgotten to the world.

ST. NINIAN

In the early part of the fifth century the body of St. Ninian was laid to rest in his church at Whitherne (County Wigtown, Scotland). It was called "Candida Casa," for he had built it of white stone, so different from any other building known to the natives, where it was customary to build with wattles and mud, and this wonderful oratory, the *White House,* became the first shrine of the apostle of the Picts.

In the church of later date the shrine of St. Ninian became a renowned resort of pilgrims; kings and princes knelt by his relics, and many a devotee came from abroad to venerate so great a saint.

In 1425 King James I. of Scotland granted full

protection to all pilgrims visiting this Scottish shrine, and in 1473 Margaret, queen of James III., attended by a retinue of ladies, made a pilgrimage. James IV. paid many visits and gave large offerings, and his son James grasped the palmer's staff and humbly bent his knee by the shrine, the sanctity of which continued to attract pilgrims for a considerable time after the Reformation.

In the remaining chancel of the old priory church stands a tomb beneath an arch of the presbytery, on the north of the high altar, which is supposed to be the shrine of St. Ninian, and as such it has recently been restored. The conjecture is doubtless correct, for, as with other early British saints, the body of the saint appears never to have been disturbed for translation into a movable feretory.

An effigy which lies in the crypt of Glasgow Cathedral is called the shrine of St. Kentigern, but there appears to be no foundation for the assumption that it is in any way connected with that prelate. The cathedral was rich in shrines and reliquaries before the *Protestant Purge*, but now we look in vain throughout Scotland for any such remains.

ST. JUSTIN

Another remnant of the shrine of a British saint is to be seen in the church of St. Justin, at Llaniestyn, in the Isle of Anglesey.

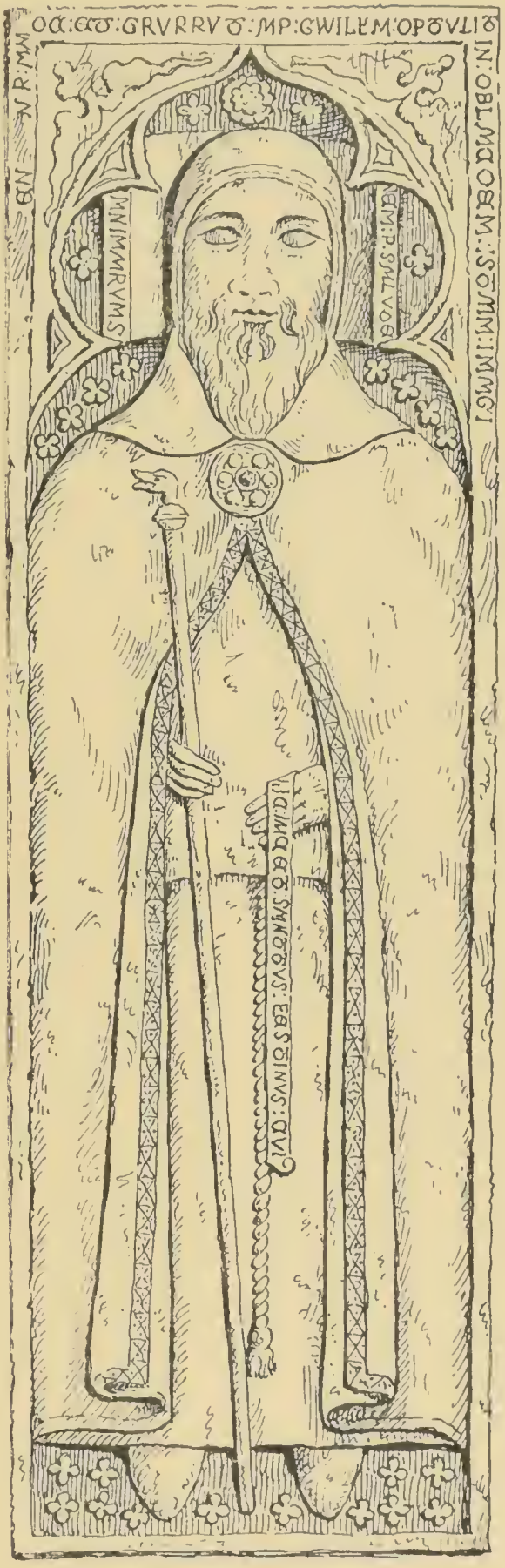
St. Justin was born in Brittany in the sixth century, but came to labour among his countrymen in Wales, where he died, and was buried by St. David.

The ancient church of Llaniestyn has gone, but in the modern building the effigy over the saint's tomb is still carefully preserved.

The monument of St. Justin is probably of the fourteenth century; of the earlier shrine which enclosed the

relics of the saint for eight previous centuries we have no knowledge.

The recumbent effigy of the saint is vested in a close-fitting cap, evidently the hood of the habit which is seen beneath a cope. In his right hand he holds a staff with a dog's head as a finial, and an open scroll in the left. On the scroll and above the head is a mutilated inscription, which, as far as can be deciphered, is: "Hic jacet Sanctus Yestinus, cui Gwenllian, Filia Madoc et Gryffyt ap Gwilym, optulit in oblacoem istam imaginem p. salute animarum."



EFFIGY OF ST. JUSTIN

STS. DAVID AND CARADOC

In a secluded valley of the Alan, hidden away from the rushing world, still far remote from railway and locomotive, reposes the town of St. Davids. The whole place is known by the name of its sainted founder, the patron saint of Wales. His shrine, in part, is yet preserved, and probably

his relics, though moved from the structural *throne*, where for many centuries they were elevated for the veneration of the faithful.

SHRINE OF ST. DAVID

To that remote recess in Wales went the Norman William, forgetful for the moment of the conqueror in the more humble capacity of the pilgrim. A century later another royal conqueror, in the midst of his progress, assumed the guise of a pilgrim, and Henry II., on his way

ST. DAVID'S SHRINE, BACK VIEW, SHOWING THE AUMBRYS FOR OFFERINGS

to Ireland, besought victory at the shrine of St. David, offering two velvet copes, and on his return he again knelt by the relics and presented for a thankoffering a handful of silver.

The appearance of the shrine at this period cannot be determined, but that it was portable is evident, for in 1086 it was stolen and despoiled.[1] Bishop Richard de Carew, in 1275, constructed a new feretory for the relics, and, from the offerings, was able to forward the rebuilding of the cathedral.

The structural part of St. David's shrine is mainly of this date (1275), though showing various alterations at later periods.

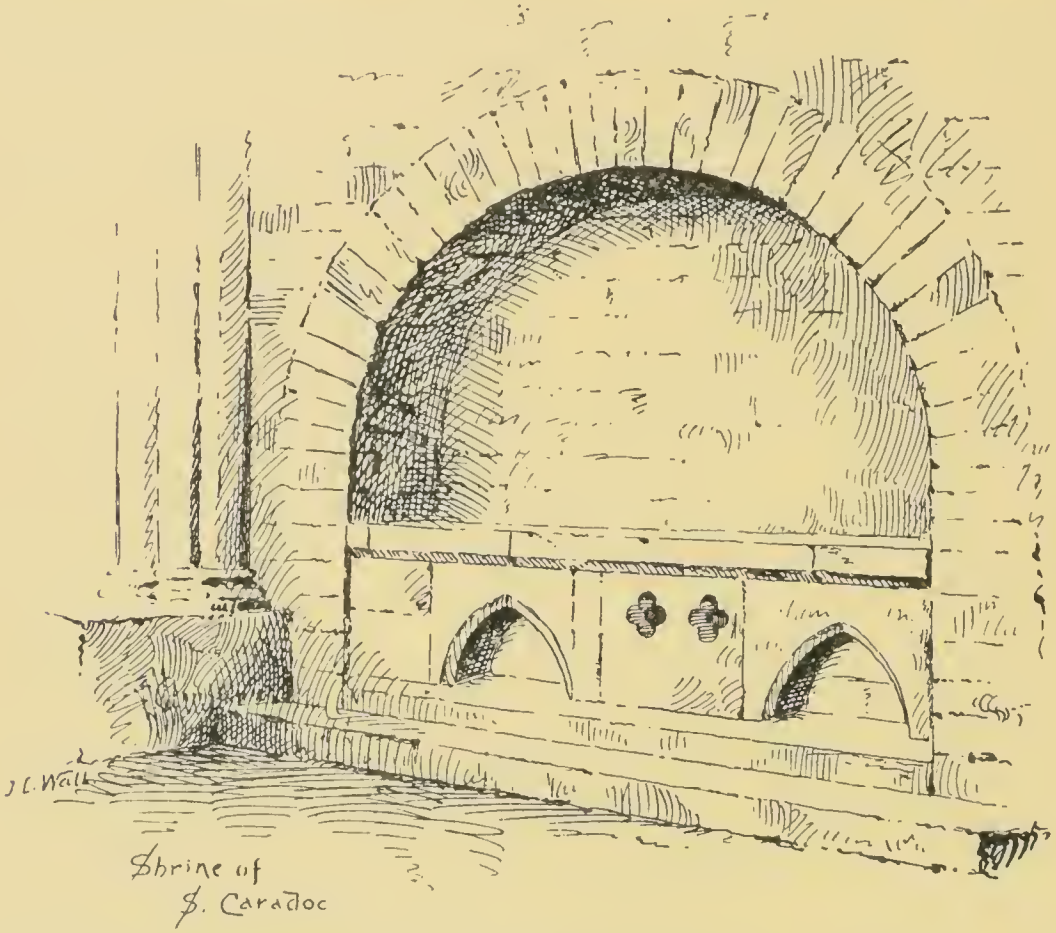
It occupies the third bay from the east on the north side of the presbytery, and extends from pier to pier. On a moulded base is a seat for the pilgrims supported on three low pointed arches, each arch forming a recess about a foot in height and the same in depth; the spandrels are relieved by deep quatrefoils, the two in the middle are pierced through the stone, and communicate with aumbries at the back. These openings are large enough to admit a hand, and were probably for passing offerings of money; even at the present time occasional pilgrims drop coins into the cavities. Above the seat rises a blind arcade of three arches surmounted by crocketed hand-mouldings terminating in head corbels. The two heads which remain represent a priest and a youth with a coronet, and were recently removed from the back. Within the arches of the walls were paintings of St. David in full pontificals in the centre, St. Patrick on his right, and St. Denis on his left; these were extant in the time of Elizabeth.[2]

The back of the shrine, projecting slightly into the aisle, is very plain. In this lower part are three round-

[1] *Anglia Sacra*, vol. ii. p. 649.
[2] Browne Willis, 69.

headed aumbries, and above them two others between three quatrefoils.

Upon the uppermost slab rested the feretory — that which we have seen was stolen in 1086, carried out of the town, and totally stripped of its valuable casing. No further mention of it is known until 1326, when we find that the townspeople were required in time of war to



follow the bishop with the feretory for one day's journey in either direction;[1] and a statute of Bishop Nicholls (1418–1433) enjoins the chantry priests to carry the relics in procession when so directed by the precentor.[2] Three officers were appointed by Bishop Beck to take charge of the offerings.

The importance of this shrine and the great reverence

[1] *Mens. Sac.*, i. 255–7. [2] *Lib. Stat.*, 299.

in which the relics of St. David were held may be gathered from a papal decree, that two pilgrimages to St. Davids were equal to one to Rome, whence arose the saying, "Roma semel quantum, dat bis Menevia tantum."

Beneath the same roof, at the back of the choir stalls and open to the north transept, is the shrine of St. Caradoc; there, by his own express wish, he was buried in 1124.

On a stone step for the accommodation of kneeling pilgrims, and canopied by a round arch, is the lowly shrine. Between a stone shelf and a shallow base the front of the shrine is relieved by two pointed arches, and between them are pierced two quatrefoils chamfered inwards, which may possibly have been for receiving the coins offered by pilgrims.

STS. DUBRICIUS AND TEILO

The tombs, or shrines, of two seventh-century saints—the founder of the see of Llandaff and his successor, Sts. Dubricius and Teilo—are still standing in that cathedral.

St. Dubricius died and was buried in the Isle of Bardsey, but his body was translated to Llandaff in 1120 by Bishop Urban in the presence of David, Bishop of Bangor, and of Griffith, king of North Wales.

Arrived at Llandaff, it was thought advisable that the relics should be washed after so long a journey, for which purpose three basins were placed before the altar of St. Peter and the three local saints; but when they began the ablutions "by the touch of the holy relics the water bubbled as if a red-hot stone had been thrown into it."[1] The body of St. Dubricius was then put "in tumbam ad hoc aptam," and placed "in antiquo monasterio, ante Sanctæ Mariæ altare versus aquilonalem plagam" (in a tomb fitted for the purpose . . . in the ancient monastery, before St. Mary's altar on the north side).

[1] *Liber Landavensis.*

It does not appear that the bones of St. Dubricius were ever put into a feretory, but they remained in his tomb—or successive tombs—situated on the north side of the presbytery, while almost opposite to it on the south side is the shrine of his co-founder, St. Teilo.

St. Teilo had lived so saintly a life that three churches disputed for the privilege of obtaining his body: Penaly, near Tenby, his ancestral home; Llandeilo Fawr, where he had lived an hermitical life; and Llandaff, the place of his cathedra. The dispute could not be settled, but after a night of fasting and prayer, we are told that in the morning the rival claimants beheld three bodies exactly alike, that each church took one, and each claimed to have the real body.

The Llandaff body was buried in the "antiquum monasterium," but was afterwards translated into the new cathedral built by Urban, the Norman bishop, into a tomb on the south side of the presbytery. St. Teilo, like St. Dubricius, apparently never had a portable feretory, but his relics were left to rest beneath a fixed monument.

The saint and his shrine were considered so holy that it was customary to take the most solemn oaths upon it: "Super tumbam Sancti Theliawi et super omnia sacrosancta ejusdam ecclesiæ" (upon the tomb of St. Teilo and upon all the holy relics in the same church); and "Super tumbam S. Thelawi et super sacrosancta evangelia Ecclesiæ de Landav" (upon the tomb of St. Teilo, and upon the Holy Gospels of the church of Llandaff).

This Book of the Gospels of the church of Llandaff, on which the oaths were also taken, is evidently the manuscript known for many centuries as the "Book of St. Chad," and preserved at Lichfield, to which place it was by some means transferred about 1020, probably a restoration to its original library. This beautiful manuscript was quite possibly penned by St. Chad.

The tomb (upon which oaths were taken as late as the seventeenth century) is in a recess beneath a Norman window, and on it lies the effigy of a bishop in Mass vestments and wearing a mitre. This effigy is of early Decorated workmanship and was possibly placed here in honour of the saint when the presbytery was remodelled. The decoration of the arched recess and canopy is quite modern.

In 1850 the tomb was opened and the following inscription found in it:—

"*September the 8th*, 1736.

"On the south side of this chansell nare the door is a Tumbe whin (within) a neach (niche) now wall'd up it is supposed to be Sant Blawe (Teilo) Tumbe when i opened the Tumbe the Parson buried apar'd to be a Bishop by his Pastorall Staffe and Crotcher. The Stafe when we came to Tuch it it droped to peacis but the Crocher being Puter (pewter) But almost perished But wold hold toogether. Betwithin the Stafe there was a large cup by his side but almost perished The most of Puter he was rapt in Leather and the upper part was very sound.

"John Wood
Architect of Queen Sq^r. Bath.
"Thomas Omar
Joyner and Carpenter of Queen Sq^r."

ST. CHAD

The first tomb of that great Celtic saint, St. Chad, was in the churchyard of St. Mary's at Lichfield. He was buried in

"a wooden monument, made like a little house, covered, having a hole in the wall, through which those that go thither for devotion usually put in their hand and take out some of the dust, which they put into water and give to sick cattle or men to drink, upon which they are presently eased of their infirmity, and restored to health."

This paragraph from the Ecclesiastical History of the

Venerable Bede,[1] in dwelling upon the healing virtues of the saint, helps to convey a better understanding of the formation of the primitive wooden shrine in which St. Chad's relics reposed until the church of St. Peter had been built on the site of the present cathedral, when they were translated into it.

When Bishop Roger de Clinton rebuilt the cathedral to the honour of the Blessed Virgin and St. Chad in 1148, he placed the relics of their now patron saint in a shrine worthy of his memory.

There was a priest of St. Chad in the cathedral at Lichfield—evidently the custodian of his relics—to whom, in 1241, a special benefaction was made of certain houses in the city for the proper keeping-up of the shrine.

To accommodate the throng of pilgrims and to yet more highly exalt St. Chad, Bishop Walter Langton built the present Lady Chapel, thereby providing greater space for the shrine in the retro-choir. Between the two piers in this place, in 1296, he erected a beautiful new shrine at a cost of £2,000 (£40,000 present day).

Bishop Robert Stretton, who ruled the see from 1360 to 1386, erected a yet more magnificent shrine at his sole cost. The substructure was of marble and the feretory was adorned with gold and precious stones.

At the dawn of the sixteenth century Bishop Geoffrey Blythe enriched the shrine by a gift of two silver images, one of St. Chad and the other of St. Katherine.

Among other gifts the Sacrists' Roll[2] mentions—

"a morse of pure gold and two gold rings, which were offered that they may be placed in the shrine of St. Chad by Dan Thomas de Berkeley and his wife, and one other as catalogued above, replaced in the coffer; and Richard the Sacrist now

[1] L. iv. c. 3.

[2] *Catalogue of the Muniments and MS. Books at Lichfield, etc.*, by the Rev. J. Charles Cox, LL.D.

says that they are in the shrine of St. Chad; it is well to enquire of John, his predecessor, as to the truth of this."

This entry reveals two things—that gifts of jewels were enclosed with the relics, and that the coffer was never opened for such a puerile object as to count the riches within.

In the constitutions of the cathedral the treasurer of the chapter was required to furnish two wax tapers and to keep one lamp perpetually burning before St. Chad's altar at the west end of the shrine.

The festival of St. Chad on the 2nd of March was a veritable feast for the canons, for on that day instead of their usual one shilling they each received ten shillings.

At the time of the Reformation, Bishop Lee pleaded hard with Henry VIII. to spare the memorial of their first bishop, the greatest ornament of their cathedral, and probably because that bishop had secretly married the King to Anne Boleyn, his request was favourably received. This was a singular instance of a shrine being spared at that period. It was, however, but a temporary respite, for it was shortly afterwards robbed and demolished.

At which of the translations the head of St. Chad was separated from the body cannot be ascertained; but it was placed in a *head reliquary* and preserved in the Chapel of the Head of St. Chad. From the Sacrists' Roll[1] we find this *chef* was of painted wood, and for safety was kept in an iron-bound coffer enclosed in another chest. The Chapel of the Head, which has been recently restored, still retains an aumbry for relics and the fifteenth-century stone gallery projecting over the south choir aisle from which the relics were exposed to pilgrims.

In the Chapter Act Books[2] is the following entry :—

[1] A.D. 1345. [2] F. 4, A.D. 1481.

"Two monstrances given to the cathedral, in charge of William Hukyns, the custodian of S. Chad's Head, by Dean Heywood, for keeping relics."

There is also recorded another gift of an altar cloth to the altar of St. Chad, "in the chapel where his head is wonderfully honoured."

Relics of St. Chad were preserved in two other shrines, one an arm, the other a portable shrine. Whether these were kept in the great shrine behind the high altar, as suggested by Dr. Cox, enclosed in the great *coopertorium*, cannot be decided; but probably they were preserved with the other numerous reliquaries in the sacristy.

The story of the subsequent preservation of St. Chad's relics is found in the *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus*, edited by Brother Henry Foley, S.J., and is vital to our subject as the connecting link between the desecration of the former shrine and the exaltation of the present one in Birmingham.

It appears that at the ransacking, reforming, and robbery of Lichfield Cathedral, a certain Prebendary Dudley,[1] related to the famous Dudley who was formerly lord or baron, took away St. Chad's relics for the sake of the honour and reverence due to them, which he entrusted to two noble women, his relations, and of his own name, who lived at a mansion-house named Russell Hall, near the county residence of Dudley.

The prebendary in the course of time dying, these ladies, though still clinging to the ancient faith, became alarmed by reason of the severe laws, and being desirous of not exposing themselves to needless danger, gave the relics to two brothers, Henry and William Hodsheeds, who lived at Woodsaton near Sedgley in Staffordshire, by whom they were duly divided. The portions which fell to the former passed to the Rev. Father Peter

[1] Arthur Dudley, Prebendary of Colwich, 1531–1577.

Turner, S.J., on September 8th, A.D. 1615. This priest, who attended their owner on his death-bed, received his share of the relics from Hodsheed's wife "wrapped up in a piece of black buckram."

Father Turner says:—

"Both Henry and myself thought that this was the same cover in which these relics had been wrapped at the time they were laid in a silver reliquary in the Church of Lichfield. From the above-named cover I took out the sacred bones and placed them in a wooden box, 19 or 20 inches long, 6 inches deep, and 6 inches broad, together with the cover separately folded, and I sealed the box with two small seals of wax."

This was attested by Father Turner under his hand, and it was witnessed by the Rev. William Atkins, S.J., Francis Cotton, Thomas Wilkinson, and Richard Vavasour.

On October 1st, 1652, the Rev. Father Francis Foster, English Provincial of the Jesuits, inspected the relics of St. Chad, and approved of them (he being an apostolic notary). The acts were placed in the archives of the Society of Jesus.

Father Turner dying on May 27th, 1655, these relics, with the approbation of Father Edward Bedingfield, were placed with John Leverson, because he belonged at that time both to the district and to the College of Blessed Aloysius. The cover above mentioned, being old and tattered, was burnt by William Atkins, S.J.

On the Feast of St. Andrew, 1658, certain soldiers and others entering the house of Father Leverson, opened the box, broke one of the bones, and carried off others.

The end of a declaration, still kept at Mr. Fitzherbert's, of Swynnerton Hall, stands thus:—

"I, William Atkins, on March 2nd, 1664, removed these sacred relics from the box which the soldiers had broken, into another box lined with silk."

Thomas Weld Blundell, Esq., of Ince-Blundell Hall, Crosby, has written :—

"Before the opening of the Catholic Church at Birmingham, I understood that the bones of the saint had been discovered in the following way. A key was found at Swynnerton to which was attached a label, and on the label was written a statement that the key would open the chest in which the relics of St. Chad had been placed; and that the chest for greater security had been removed to Aston Hall. On searching Aston Hall the chest containing the relics was found, and the key opened it."

At the consecration of the new (papal) cathedral at Birmingham in 1841, these relics of St. Chad were borne into the sanctuary, and now repose in a feretory of oak, highly enriched with painting, gilding, and jewels, in an honoured position above the high altar, and beneath a beautiful baldachino.

ST. ACCA

A part of the shrine—or tombstone—of that energetic Saxon prelate St. Acca has been excavated from oblivion, and it is hoped, by the perseverance of Bishop Browne, that the remaining fragments of this memorial may yet be found. Besides his oversight of the sees of Hexham and Candida Casa, or Whitherne, St. Acca was diligent in exalting the relics of saints and their shrines to places of honour, and it behoves us to again raise his memorial from debasement, even though it be but a stone.

"Blessed Accas, Actas, and Arcas, Bishop of Hexham in England and of Candida Casa in Scotland," is commemorated in the Scottish Kalendar of Camerarius on January 16th.

When Acca died in 740

"his body was buried on the outside of the wall, at the east end of the church of Hexham. Two stone crosses, adorned with

exquisite carving, were placed, the one at his head, the other at his feet. On one, that at his head, was an inscription stating that he was there buried. From this place, three hundred years after his burial, he was translated, in consequence of a divine revelation made to a certain priest, and was placed within a shrine in the church with becoming honour. As a testimony to all of the merit of his sanctity, the chasuble, tunic, and sudarium, which were placed in a tomb with his sacred body, preserve to this day, not only their form but their original strength. There was found upon his breast a wooden tablet in the form of a portable altar made of two pieces of wood joined with silver nails; on which is the dedicatory inscription, 'Alme Trinitati. agie. sophie. Sanctæ Mariæ.'"[1]

The relics of St. Acca were again translated in 1154, and the bones were separated from the dust of the body and enshrined in another casket. Then the church of Hexham had two shrines to the one saint.

Of these two shrines all trace is lost, but two pieces of the shaft (one with a portion of the head remaining) of the original cross set over St. Acca's first grave were recently dug out of the churchyard at Hexham, and at Dilston, near Hexham, a stone used as the lintel of a doorway proved to be another portion of this cross. These massive fragments have now been put together and form the complete shaft of the cross with the exception of a piece about four feet long, which has temporarily been supplied with a wooden substitute.

The following is taken from Bishop Browne's enthusiastic description of this wonderful find :—The face and two sides are covered from top to bottom with beautiful scrolls and bunches of grapes and tendrils. On the back, it is supposed, the sculpture has all been chiselled off, leaving it bare and battered in appearance; but on careful examination the remains of an inscription were discovered,

[1] *Simeon of Durham, an. DCCXL.*

in letters two and a half inches long. Across the very top of the shaft is *A . . . A sanctus huius ecclesiæ*, evidently reading "Acca, holy, of this church [bishop]." Two or three feet lower down is *unigeniti fili Dei*, as though some profession of Acca's faith was inscribed on his head stone, possibly in connection with the reason why he was for a time suspended from his bishopric.

The Bishop of Bristol, Dr. Browne, tells us that he hopes to find the missing portion, and that he has reason to believe the cross which stood at the foot of the grave is in existence beneath certain buildings, and that he has taken steps to have excavations made when the lease of that building falls in.

ST. ERKENWALD

Londoners were justly proud to have in their midst the entire body of their third bishop, Erkenwald; and the chapter of the cathedral church of St. Paul looked upon it as their greatest treasure.

The bishop's body had been buried in the crypt, and as we learn from the *Nova Legenda Angliæ*, the vault above the tomb was decorated with paintings.

In the great fire of 1087–1088 the cathedral was destroyed, but it is said that the shrine was untouched.

On the 14th of November, 1148, the body of St. Erkenwald was translated to a position near the high altar, close to the shrine of St. Mellitus—Dugdale says to "the east side of the wall above the high altar"; while in the inventory *Haec duo sunt collateralia in magno altari* evidently means that the shrines of the two saints stood side by side, probably on the altar beam, as certain reliquaries are seen in the drawing of St. Augustine's monastery (page 20).

In an inventory of the Treasury of the year 1245 we

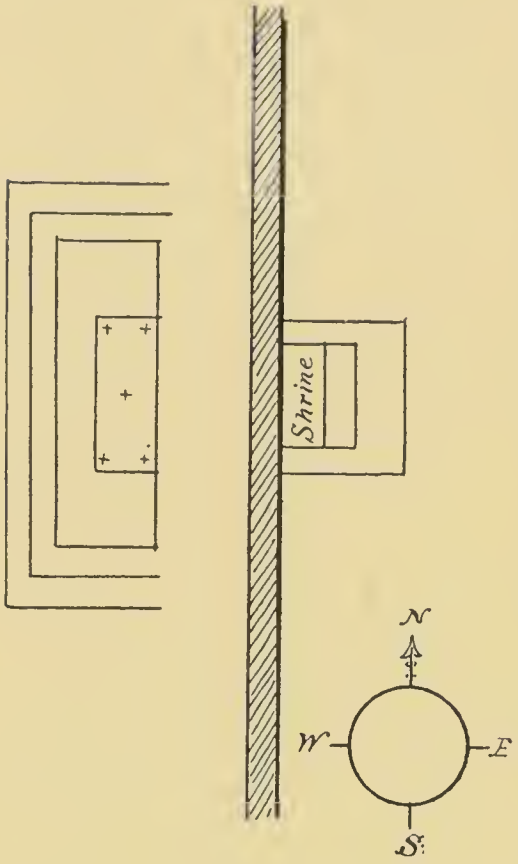
have a description of the feretory. It was of wood, covered with plates of silver, and enriched with images, and precious stones to the number of one hundred and thirty.

In 1314 Bishop Gilbert de Segrave laid the first stone of a new shrine to which the relics of St. Erkenwald were translated twelve years later. This must refer to a fixed structure on which the feretory was placed, and was the commencement of that shrine which stood until all such monuments were reformed away. To contribute in making the shrine worthy of so great a saint one of the canons, Walter de Thorpe (following the example of a former dean who had fastened to the feretory his gold ring set with a sapphire), bequeathed all his gold rings and jewellery, and five pounds for the work. Soon after this the dean and chapter decorated the feretory with precious metals and stones; which, however, when the gifts warranted the outlay, was quite eclipsed by the work done upon it in 1339.

William de Meleford, archdeacon of Colchester and canon of St. Paul's, in 1335 had given forty pounds for the ornamentation of the shrine. Three London goldsmiths were retained for a whole year for the work, beginning at Candlemas, the master smith at eight shillings and the other two at five shillings a week each.

The sumptuousness of the shrine and the reported increase of miracles caused it to become one of the most popular resorts of pilgrims. St. Erkenwald was the fashion. The end of the fourteenth century saw riches pouring into the coffers of the humble Saxon bishop. The captive monarch King John of France made an offering of twelve nobles; and among other gifts Richard de Preston, a grocer in the city, gave his best sapphire stone, which was to remain on the shrine for the cure of infirmities in the eyes, and its virtues were publicly proclaimed. Thomas Samkyn, squire to the Abbess of Barking, also gave a silver girdle.

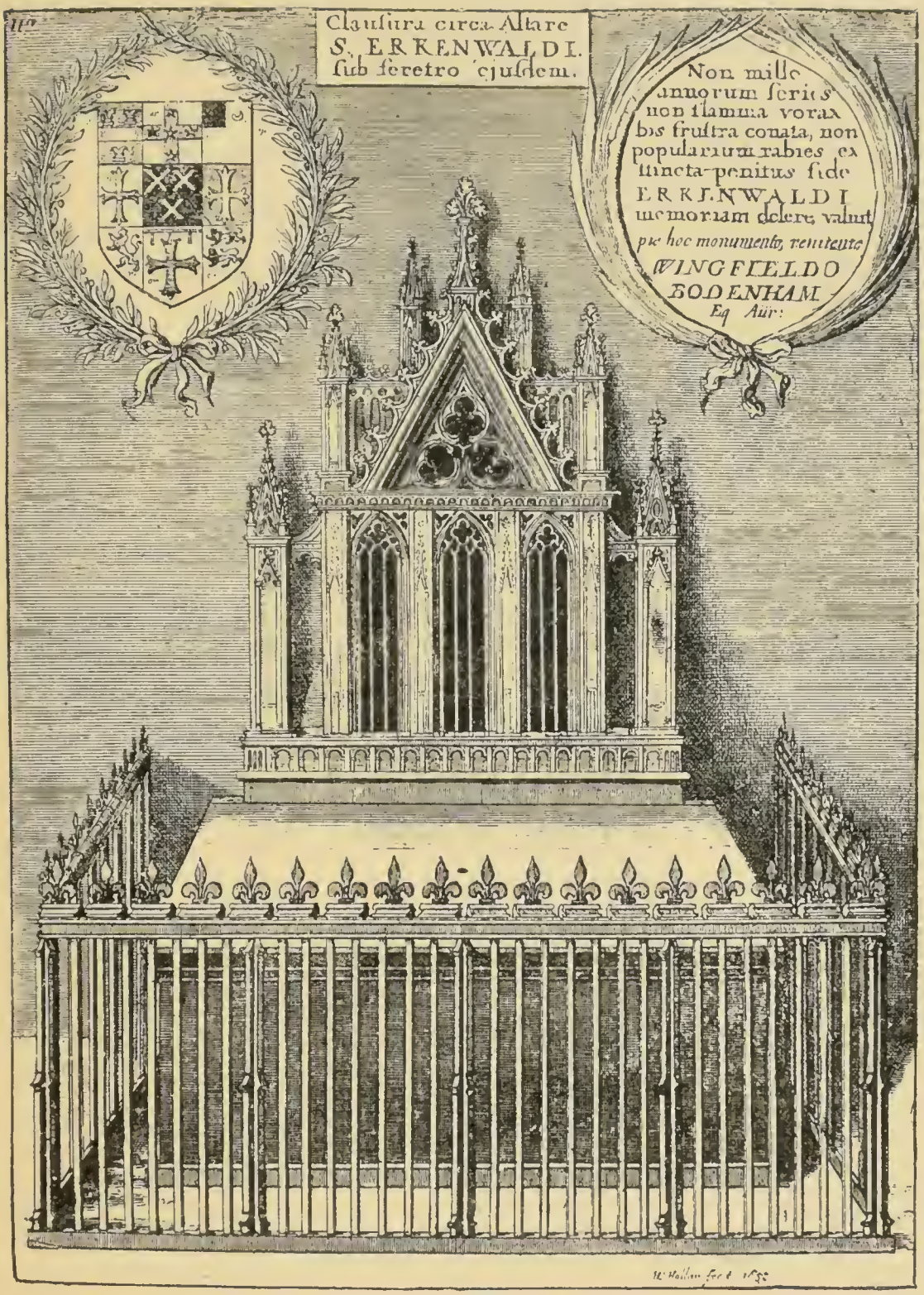
The position of the shrine may be better understood by the aid of the accompanying diagram. It stood against the east side of the high altar screen, with the attached altar of St. Erkenwald eastward of that, so that the priest would face west when saying Mass.



In Hollar's plate is a representation of this altar, with an elevation of the east end of the feretory, in which the lack of depth of the railings must be attributed to defective delineation, although Dugdale states that it was taken from the original draft. And in this view nothing can be seen of the numerous images with which the shrine was adorned. It only gives us the delicate form of the feretory, in shape like a church, supported on either side by a kind of flying buttress; the ridge of the roof was cruciform, and in this elevation, beyond the foremost or eastern gable, are seen the roofs of the transepts. For the details of its beauty the inventories must again be requisitioned, and however perfect the feretory was thought to be, these documents reveal a further lavish outlay from the munificent offerings.

"Fait a remembre, que ceux sount les parcells faitz per John Grantham, orfiour, sur le toumbe de St. Erkenwald, le XXII jour d'Octobre, 3. Hen. 4.

Enprimes pour le poys d'argent, outre l'argent deliverie a mesme la John . . . . . XVII. VS. IIIId.



THE SHRINE OF ST. ERKENWALD

From the plate by W. Hollar

Item pour l'endorreur d'une ymage de St. Erkenwald
xxxviis. iiid.

Item a une baas a un ymage all manere d'une enfaunt, loveraigne et l'or . . . . . xs. viiid.

Item pur xiiii foille en le part del North, pur l'overaigne et l'endorrur . . . . . xxviis. viiid.

Item pur translation overaygne del fyn en le West, tanque al East . . . . . xis. viiid.

Item pur l'endorrure del majeste, ii Angeles et le champ del Coronation de nostre dame, ove touts les Verges et appurtrignances . . . . . vl. xviiis. iiiid.

Item a ii overeurs pur v semayns . . xxxiiis. iiiid.

Item paye al Burnyshour . . . xis. viiid.

Item pur cc. copernayll . . . . xvid.

Item à un Payntour, pur paynter ii ymages . xvid.

Item a une home pur ayder endorrer pur un jour et dim
iiis. iiiid.

Item pur le travaill du dit John et ii autres overeurs pur vi semayns . . . . . xls. ixd.

Item pur endorrur de la graunt coronall, et pur mettre les piers dedeins al fyn del Est, et lour purtenances lxvis. viid.

Item solutum cuidam Aurifabro pro garnishyng xliii lapides Christallos et Berillos deauratos, in dicto feretro impositos, pro qualibet pecia vd. unde summa . . xviiis. xid.

Item pro garnishynge unius Jocalis, ibidem positi . xid.

Item pro viii ymaginibus emptis pro dicto feretro xxs.

Item pro deauratione x ymaginum, positarum circa prædictum feretrum; qualibet pecia iiis. iiiid. . xxxiiis. iiiid.

Item solutum Herebright Pictori, pro pictura, auro, et aliis coloribus factis et impositis in feretro, et circa dictum feretrum
xxvis. viiid.

Item pro incarvatione quatuor ymaginum dicti feretri iis."

This magnificent shrine was surrounded by an iron railing, bronzed over, five feet ten inches in height, having locks, keys, closures, and openings which cost £14 2*s*. (The modern equivalent is about £225.) In order that

the grille might be kept in good condition, Thomas de Evere, the dean, in 1407 bequeathed £100 for building houses in Knight Rider Street, the rents of which were to be devoted to their reparation, and for the maintenance of lights burning about the shrine.

The cathedral possessed a cross of crystal, which was placed on the shrine (probably on the altar before the shrine) on great festivals.

ST. MELLITUS

St. Mellitus, the first Italian bishop of London, who fled before the revival of paganism, had a shrine in the same cathedral. He afterwards became the archbishop of Canterbury, and was there buried. His shrine stood on the south side of that of St. Augustine in the monastery outside the walls of Canterbury (see page 20), but London gained some relic of him, which was enclosed in a feretory of wood, covered, on the front side only, with plates of silver and with images, surmounted by the figure of an angel of copper gilt.

Another relic of Mellitus—an arm—was obtained by Bishop Eustace of London, in the thirteenth century, from the monks of St. Augustine's monastery. This arm reliquary was of silver set with sixteen crystals, four large, and six smaller jewels.

ST. ALDHELM

St. Aldhelm, bishop of Sherborne, had died at Doulting in the year 709, but his body was brought to his old monastery of Malmesbury for burial. His life, his writings on virginity, and his acts, especially concerning the differences between the British and Saxon Churches, called forth great veneration from all the inhabitants of the south-west of England.

About 837 King Ethelwulf made a costly shrine for the bishop's relics. The front was decorated with images of solid silver, and on the back the miracles of the saint were represented in raised metal-work, beaten up on plates of gold. The inscription was in letters of gold on a crystal pediment, and it was adorned with precious stones.

The Danes swept over the land, the body of St. Aldhelm was hidden for safety, and the shrine went the way of all things of value. It was great booty the Danes obtained from England.

During the short reign of Edwy he vented his wrath on St. Dunstan by turning the regular monks out of the monasteries and giving those houses to secular canons. At Malmesbury it proved a fortunate innovation, for the intruding canons, while curiously prying over their newly acquired possession, found the missing relics. These were taken from their hiding-place and enclosed in a shrine, to the great joy of all who heard of it, and the regular monks almost forgave the seculars—whom they called "irregular and vagabond men"—for the great service they had rendered to the Church.

Again St. Aldhelm's fame spread far and wide, and a troop of cavalry was necessary to preserve order among the enormous crowds of pilgrims who thronged to his shrine on special occasions.

ST. BEDE

The memory and the relics of the Venerable Bede will always be precious to the Anglo-Saxon race, not only for his exemplary life, but also for his literary labours. But for him a period of England's history would have been obscured in an unfathomable darkness.

St. Bede died on the 26th of May, 735, and was buried

in the south apse of the church of St. Paul, at Jarrow, but his body was afterwards translated to a more honourable position within the same sanctuary.

According to Mabillon, his name was inserted among the saints in the martyrologies long before the title "Venerable" was given to him; but in the acts of the Second Council of Aix-la-Chapelle in 836 he is called "The Venerable." Touching this title is a legend that it was derived from a celestial source, which legend may have originated in an attempt to account for the unusual epithet *venerabilis* instead of *sanctus*. It was said that after the death of Bede one of his scholars endeavoured to compose an epitaph in a single leonine verse. He began—*Hac sunt in fossa;* but when he had engraved thus far in the stone he found that his intended conclusion—*Bedæ sancti* or *presbyteri ossa*—would not bring the metre aright. Weary with futile attempts he retired to rest, and in the morning, behold! engraved on the tomb by angelic hands—"Hac sunt in fossa, Bedæ Venerabilis ossa."

So famed did St. Bede become by his writings that his works were eagerly sought; great prices were given for transcripts of but small portions of them, and St. Lullus, archbishop of Mentz, after receiving a manuscript copy of one, sent a silk vesture to cover St. Bede's shrine.

Elfred Westoue, a priest of the cathedral at Durham, was a great collector of relics, with which he enriched the treasury of that church; the manner of gaining them does not seem to have troubled his conscience so long as he obtained them. From the pen of Symeon of Durham[1] we find that this reverend impostor declared that he had a vision directing him to proceed on a mission for the honour of various saints. He was to go to those monasteries and churches in Northumbria in which reposed the bodies of saints and to exalt them above the ground for

[1] c. xlii.

veneration; in doing this he appropriated a portion of the relics of each saint, probably by way of a fee, and by such means gathered a large collection which afterwards figured in the inventories of Durham. Elfred had succeeded well, and he now set his mind on obtaining the relics of St. Bede; but the clergy of Jarrow were jealous of their treasure. To disarm suspicion he resorted to stratagem, to gain by stealth that which he could not honestly obtain.

For many years Elfred visited the shrine at Jarrow on St. Bede's day, ostensibly for venerating the relics, and regularly returned empty. His devotion never flagged, until one year—1020—after his pilgrimage, he secretly started for Durham at daybreak, an hour he had never before begun his return journey; this was his last visit, his devotion in that quarter ceased—he had attained his object. When asked what had become of the bones of St. Bede he would answer, "No one knows better than I—let the same coffin which holds the most sacred body of our Father Cuthbert hold also the bones of Bede, the venerable doctor and monk. Let no one seek a portion of his relics elsewhere than in that hospitable chest." At the same time, although by this answer he had committed himself to no definite assertion, he enjoined secrecy on the brethren as to what he had hinted, in case their treasures should be rifled.

The description of the opening of St. Cuthbert's coffin in 1104, written by an anonymous monk and printed in the *Acta Sanctorum*, records the finding of St. Bede's bones in a small linen sack, resting by the side of St. Cuthbert, and confirms the surmise that they had been obtained and placed there by Elfred.

The bones of St. Bede and of other saints were not replaced in St. Cuthbert's coffin after the translation, but were put in certain wooden receptacles hewn out for the

purpose. "These are honourably preserved elsewhere in the church in a larger repository expressly made for them."[1] From the description of these receptacles being hewn out of wood they were evidently of the nature of that relic of a past age preserved in the minster at Wimborne—a trunk of a tree with a cavity deeply sunk in its midst.

In the year 1155 Bishop Hugh Pudsey enshrined the relics of St. Bede in a feretory of the purest gold and silver, which he adorned with jewels.[2] They were afterwards removed from the feretory of St. Cuthbert by Richard de Castro Bernardi and placed in the Galilee, between two pillars on the south side, upon a beautiful monument of blue marble, three feet high, supported by five small pillars, one at each corner and one in the middle.

"The uppermost stone whereon St. Bede's feretory stood had three holes at each corner into which irons were fastened to guide the cover when it was drawn up or let down. This cover was of fine wainscot very curiously gilded and appointed to draw up and down over the shrine, as they list to show the sumptuousness thereof."

In the *Rites of Durham* certain lines are recorded which were engraved on the lower slab commemorating the names of the bishop who defrayed the cost and of the skilled workman who constructed the shrine:—

"This coffin doth contain the bones of Venerable Bede:
Christ to the maker sense did give and to the giver gold.
One Peter framed the work, the cost Bishop Hugo made;
So Peter and Hugo patrons both St. Bede enclosed in mould."

This verse exhibits clear evidence as to the composition having been from the pen of Bishop Hugh Pudsey himself. Another name—of one who used his influence in procuring a more sumptuous shrine and more honourable

[1] Reginald. [2] Simeon of Durham.

position for this one Doctor of the Church of Saxon England—was perpetuated in another verse on the base, although with some confusion of dates :—

"In the year of our Lord a thousand three hundred and seventy
Richard of Barnardcastle did most earnestly procure
That the bones of St. Bede lying nigh St. Cuthbert's shrine
Should be translated into the Galilee, there to remain,
Which Richard deceased, for the love he did bear to Bede,
Caused his own bones to be laid near him under a marble stone indeed."

In 1538 William Watsonn, *alias* William Wyloume, the Master and Keeper of the Feretory, was also the deece prior or sub-prior, whose duties at the shrine at this time are thus related in the *Rites* :—

"The deece prior had the keys and the keeping of Saint Bede's Shrine which did stand in the Galilee, and whensoever there was any general procession then he commanded his clerk, giving him the keys of Saint Bede's Shrine, to draw the cover of it, and to take it down and did carry it into the Revestry. Then it was carried with four monks about in procession every principal day, and when the procession was done it was carried into the Galilee and set up there again, with the cover let down over it and locked, the keys brought by the clerk to the Master of the Feretory again."

In the account of the procession on "Hallow-Thursday" we are told that every monk had on a cope, and among other things was carried St. Bede's feretory borne on the shoulders of four monks.

The estimate in which the reputation of the two saints Cuthbert and Bede were respectively held by a French bishop is thus related by Camden. As the bishop returned from Scotland he came to the cathedral of Durham, and kneeling at the shrine of St. Cuthbert offered a bawby (the smallest Scottish coin), saying, *Sancte Cuthberte, is sanctus sis, ora pro me*—St. Cuthbert, if thou art a saint, pray for me. But afterwards coming to the shrine of

St. Bede he offered a French crown, with the invocation, *Sancte Beda, quia sanctus es, ora pro me*—St. Bede, because thou art a saint, pray for me.

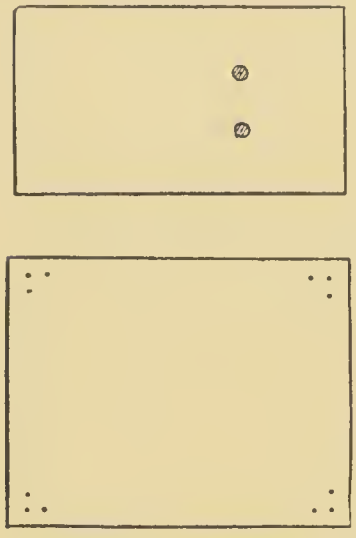
The shrine of St. Bede was destroyed in the visitation held by Dr. Lee, Dr. Henley, and Master Blythman at Durham. In November, 1541, John Symson was paid two shillings for four days' work removing the shrines of Sts. Cuthbert and Bede; and another fifteen-pence was paid to Rayffe Skelis and three others for taking away the fragments. One account says that the bones of the Venerable Bede were scattered, another says they were buried within the plain, high tomb, still called "the tomb of Bede." In 1831 the tomb was opened and the relics examined; after being enclosed in a lead-lined chest the bones were replaced in the tomb with a document recording the proceedings. At the same time the couplet already quoted was sculptured on the uppermost slab.

In the *Rites* it is said:—

"There is two stones that was of Saint Bede's Shrine in the Galilee, of blue marble, which, after the defacing thereof, was brought into the body of the church, and lyeth now over against the eastmost tomb of the Nevills joyned both together. The uppermost stone of the said Shrine hath three holes in every corner, for irons to stand and to be fastened in, to guide the covering, where it was drawn up or let down, whereupon did stand St. Bede's Shrine. And the other is a plain marble stone, which was lowest, and did lie above a little marble tomb, whereon the lower end of the five small pillars of marble did stand, which pillars did also support the uppermost stone."

Dr. Kitchin, Dean of Durham, has kindly measured these stones, which still lie between the fourth and fifth piers on the south side of the nave. The lower stone is 4 feet $4\frac{1}{3}$ inches long by 2 feet $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, and has two holes—both filled with lead—about one-third down the length of the stone, the meaning of which is not

apparent. Probably the under side of the stone contains the marks of the bases of the five pillars, but it is not known to have been removed since it was placed there in 1541. The slab on which the feretory rested is placed in the pavement with its upper surface exposed. It measures 4 feet 7 inches by 3 feet 10 inches; the twelve holes in which the irons were fixed are filled with lead.



SLABS OF ST. BEDE'S SHRINE

From these two fragments and the descriptions from Symeon and the *Rites* it is quite possible to conjecture the general appearance of St. Bede's shrine (see Frontispiece).

ST. GUTHLAC

From the little knowledge we have of the shrine of St. Guthlac, the hermit of Croyland, it appears to have been somewhat different in character from the greater number of premier shrines.

When Guthlac, who had been trained at Repton monastery, died at Croyland in 714, in the monastery he had there founded, Eadburga, abbess of Repton, sent him a sarcophagus of Derbyshire lead and a shroud, in memory of his former connection with her abbey.

Amongst the pilgrims came Wiglaf, king of Mercia, and his devotion to the saint was so great that from 833 he omitted not to visit the shrine at least once every year, each time offering some jewel of great value; but they were all stolen by his successor Bertulph. The reputation of the healing powers of St. Guthlac, however, increased the number of offerings so rapidly that by the year 851 the riches of the shrine far exceeded those before the spoliation.

King Ethelred's tribute resulted, in many monasteries, in the seizure of reliquaries and the stripping of shrines, but at Croyland Abbot Osketul avoided such an indignity to St. Guthlac by paying 400 marks.

From the fury of the Danes and from fire, the feretory of St. Guthlac was repeatedly rescued, and it was not until the twelfth century that a fitting shrine could be erected according to the more perfect skill of the times. At last the relics were translated, in 1136, into a rich shrine of wood, covered with plates of gold and silver, encrusted with jewels, which had been given to St. Guthlac by Robert de Grandineto.

Abbot Robert de Redinges, in 1175, made a new front to the shrine of greater beauty, evidently that part which was seen above the high altar.

In 1195 the relics were again translated. It was determined to build a shrine of greater height to contain the feretory, and it was to be of the most beautiful workmanship, worthy of so great a saint.

On the 5th of the Calends of May, being a Saturday, after the singing of lauds, the feretory was taken down, and the convent stood around singing, while the leaden coffin, given by the Abbess Eadburga, was examined. It was bound with iron and then sealed with lead in six different places, after which it was placed on a new altar which had been built above the steps of the sanctuary, until the shrine was again ready to receive it.

On the following Monday the workmen began to excavate beneath the great altar for the purpose of strengthening the foundations, for it must be remembered that Croyland Abbey was built on piles. The work of the altar was finished on the Feast of Sts. Philip and James, after which they erected the shrine upon a basement; pillars of marble supported slabs of the same material, on which the feretory was to rest. The masons diligently

attended to the work, and on the 1st of June a vast multitude assembled to witness the gorgeous ceremonial with which the abbot and convent deposited the relics on their throne.

From the description of this shrine the monks of the Fens were evidently following the principles of design displayed in the shrine of St. Bede, which had been constructed forty years previously. It was different from the generally followed plan of the great shrines, and probably fashions were followed in these matters as well as styles of architecture. In the fancifully depicted shrine of St. Thomas in the Canterbury glass—erected some thirty years later—a substructure of pillars supporting the feretory may again be seen. Although it is not a representation of the actual structure of the shrine, it exhibits the prevalent idea of an ideal monument.

STS. OSWALD AND WULFSTAN

St. Oswald and St. Wulfstan were twin objects of devotion to the pilgrims to Worcester. So great were their combined intercessions considered by King John that he willed the corporeal casket of his own sinful soul should be entombed between the shrines of the two saints, which stood one at either side of the presbytery.

St. Oswald died in 992, but his relics were translated from the humble tomb in which he was first interred to a rich shrine by Aldulf, his successor in both the sees of Worcester and York. To the latter place the greater part of his relics were afterwards translated. During the dispute between Matilda and Stephen, Worcester was sacked, and the monks barely saved the relics of St. Oswald from profanation, for as they bore the shrine from the church the rabble rushed in at the gate.

St. Wulfstan died in 1095. This last Saxon bishop to rule an English see had no lack of detractors among the Norman prelates, but all their base charges of incompetence and disloyalty were disproved, events which gave rise to the legend that the post-mortem power of St. Edward the Confessor allowed no one to usurp the bishopric from the venerable Wulfstan.

St. Wulfstan was buried in the new cathedral he had built at Worcester, and King William I. covered his tomb with workmanship of gold and silver.

King John held St. Wulfstan in so great veneration that more than once he made offerings at his shrine. Another king—Edward I.—entertained a "special affection" for St. Wulfstan, and made many pilgrimages to this feretory. After the conquest of Wales he came to this spot (December, 1273) to offer his thanksgivings.

In 1216 the gold was stripped from the feretory and melted down to meet the demand of 300 marks levied upon the convent by Louis, the Prince of France; but in two years' time, on the 7th of the Ides of June, the relics of St. Wulfstan were translated by Bishop Silvester to a new shrine, which had been built opposite to that of St. Oswald. So quick a restoration was probably owing to the offerings of pilgrims, which had greatly increased since the canonisation of their revered bishop in 1203. To this translation the bishop invited William de Trumpington, abbot of St. Albans, and on the return of William to his own abbey he triumphantly bore a rib of St. Wulfstan. There he erected an altar to the saint, above which he placed the rib, enclosed in goldsmiths' work of great beauty.

ST. SWITHUN

Winchester Cathedral, although not so rich in such possessions as those of Canterbury and Lincoln, contained

many reliquaries of saints. Among them the shrine of St. Swithun was of great popularity. The humble-minded bishop was, at his own desire, first buried in the common graveyard outside the minster, where the rain from the eaves of the roof fell upon his grave and where the passers-by might tread. There his body lay for more than a century, and after his canonisation and translation a chapel was built over the site of his first tomb at the north-west corner of the church, the foundations of which may yet be seen.

King Edgar had a shrine of great beauty made within the church—a feretory of silver plated with gold and adorned with jewels, into which the relics of St. Swithun were translated in 963 by St. Ethelwold the bishop, who at the same time enshrined the body of St. Birinus, the apostle of Wessex. The latter had been buried at Dorchester, the first cathedra of that province, but his bones had been translated by Bishop Hedda to Winchester when it was made the see city in the seventh century.

Two years after this the good bishop was praying one night before the high altar, above which were the shrines of the saints. The chroniclers say he was standing—though more probably he was napping—when there appeared to him three venerable men. The middle one addressed St. Ethelwold thus: "I am Birstan (Brithstan), formerly bishop of this city; (*then pointing to his right*) here is Birin, the first preacher and priest of this church; (*and pointing to his left*) here is St. Swithun, the spiritual patron of this church and city. Know also that as you see me with them in your presence, so I enjoy equal glory with them in heaven; why then am I defrauded of the honour due to me from mortals on earth, who am magnified with the fellowship of celestial spirits in heaven?" The jealousy of St. Brithstan, that Sts. Swithun and Birin should be honoured with costly shrines while his

bones remained in a lonely tomb, was appeased by being awarded a similar receptacle; and his effort in tearing himself from the regions of the blessed to reprimand the bishop was not in vain.

The skull of St. Swithun was carried to Canterbury by St. Elphege in the eleventh century and a fragment of it was afterwards taken to Sens, and placed in a head reliquary. The other relics of the patron of Winchester were divided to such an extent that only a very mutilated trunk could have remained in his cathedral. An arm of the saint was one of the great treasures of the minster at Peterborough.

Bishop Walkelyn translated St. Swithun from the old cathedral into the new building in 1150; and nearly a hundred years after this (in 1241) the shrine was broken by the vane falling from the tower through the roof.

In the inventory of the church goods demanded of the prior and convent by the Vicar-General Cromwell we find an enumeration of the various shrines. That document mentions one of gold, twenty-one of silver, five of copper gilt, two arms, one foot, and seven tables of relics, besides "behind the high altar St. Swithun's shrine being of plate silver and gilt, and garnished with stones."

From the letter of the commissioners—Pollard, Wriothesley, and Williams—recording the destruction, is the last mention of the shrine of that saint, best known in the popular mind by his reputation for continuous rain. This letter, dated September 21st, 1538, proceeds:—

"About three o'clock this Saturday morning, we made an end of the shrine here at Winchester. There was no gold, nor ring, nor true stone about it, but all great counterfeits; but the silver alone will amount to 2,000 marks."

This gnome-like work was a deed of darkness, and the demolition "lasted throughout the night." The visitors

were assisted in their work "by the mayor with eight or nine of his brethren, the bishop's chancellor, and Mr. doctor Crawford, with as good appearance of honest personages besides."

ST. OSMUND

In the nephew of our first Norman king, not only Salisbury but England had a prelate who will ever be famed for his greatness and his sanctity. From the date of his consecration to the see of Sarum (1078), St. Osmund gave his life and his substance to the Church and the country.

As a liturgiologist and the compiler of the *Consuetudinariam*, known as the *Use of Sarum*, he influenced the Church's services throughout the whole land and for all time.

He died in 1099 and was buried at Old Sarum, where his memory was greatly venerated, and his chasuble and a broken pastoral staff which had belonged to him, are mentioned among the treasures of the cathedral in 1222.

At the removal of the cathedral to the present site in Salisbury (in 1226) his body, and the bones of other prelates, were translated to the new church.

His relics were laid in the Lady Chapel, and he was invoked as a saint for more than two hundred years before he was formally canonised in 1456.

In the process of canonisation numberless miracles were vouched for, and in one case we are told that the sufferer placed his head and his hands "in quodam foramine eiusdem tumbe," thus intimating to a certain degree the form of this tomb, which was regarded as a shrine and about which lighted tapers were placed. Between the south aisle and the nave is a tomb attributed to Lord Stourton, who died during the reign of Queen Elizabeth; but it is certainly older than that period by some centuries,

and it has been suggested that it may form part of the original tomb of St. Osmund.[1] There are three *foramina* or apertures in the side, such as were made in the shrines of saints, and shown in that of St. Edward the Confessor and St. Thomas of Canterbury (see pages 155, 227).

The canonisation was so frequently delayed at Rome and the people flocked in such numbers to the tomb that the canons of the cathedral contemplated exhuming the body, placing it in a shrine, and venerating him as a saint without waiting for papal authority.

In 1456 the process was concluded, and the chapter at once began to erect a shrine in so stately a manner that it was not finished, or the translation completed, before the midsummer of the following year.

In the same manuscript[2] are certain memoranda relating to the shrine; but the leaves are so mutilated that it is a very incomplete account. From it, however, some idea of the *chef* of St. Osmund may be gained :—

For Saynt Osmundis hede with the garnyshyng		
Whereof is receyved be an endenture in a	.	
Item in the Wyghte of certayn stonys	. .	
Summa xix li		
And so ther is be hynde of the Weyght	. .	
Summa xviii li		
for the makyng of the same hede	. .	
for the mendying of the gilt silver	. .	
For ii. stonys for the poynts of the myter	.	iii*s.*
For xx grete stonys for the mytre and the fote		xiii*s* iiii*d*
For xxvi stonys for the mytre	. . .	xii*s*
For xvi stonys for the Crowne	. . .	viii*s*
For a cofyn of Tymbre .	. . .	xviii*d.*

A curious custom was observed in the order of procession on certain days at Salisbury, when the clergy bearing

[1] *The Canonisation of St. Osmund.* By A. R. Malden, M.A., Wilts Record Society.

[2] Muniment Room, Salisbury Cathedral.

a feretory of relics, among which were probably some of St. Osmund's, took their station at the west door of the cathedral, and held the relics high across the entrance for the procession to pass beneath.

The sole memorial of the shrine, and that a doubtful one, is a slightly raised slab of blue stone, with no inscription save the date MXCIX—the date of his death. This slab, removed by the vandal architect Wyatt to the eighth bay of the north arcade of the nave, was in 1878 replaced on its former site in the Lady Chapel.

When Wyatt explored the grave beneath this stone it was found to be empty; this was probably the first grave of St. Osmund in the present cathedral.

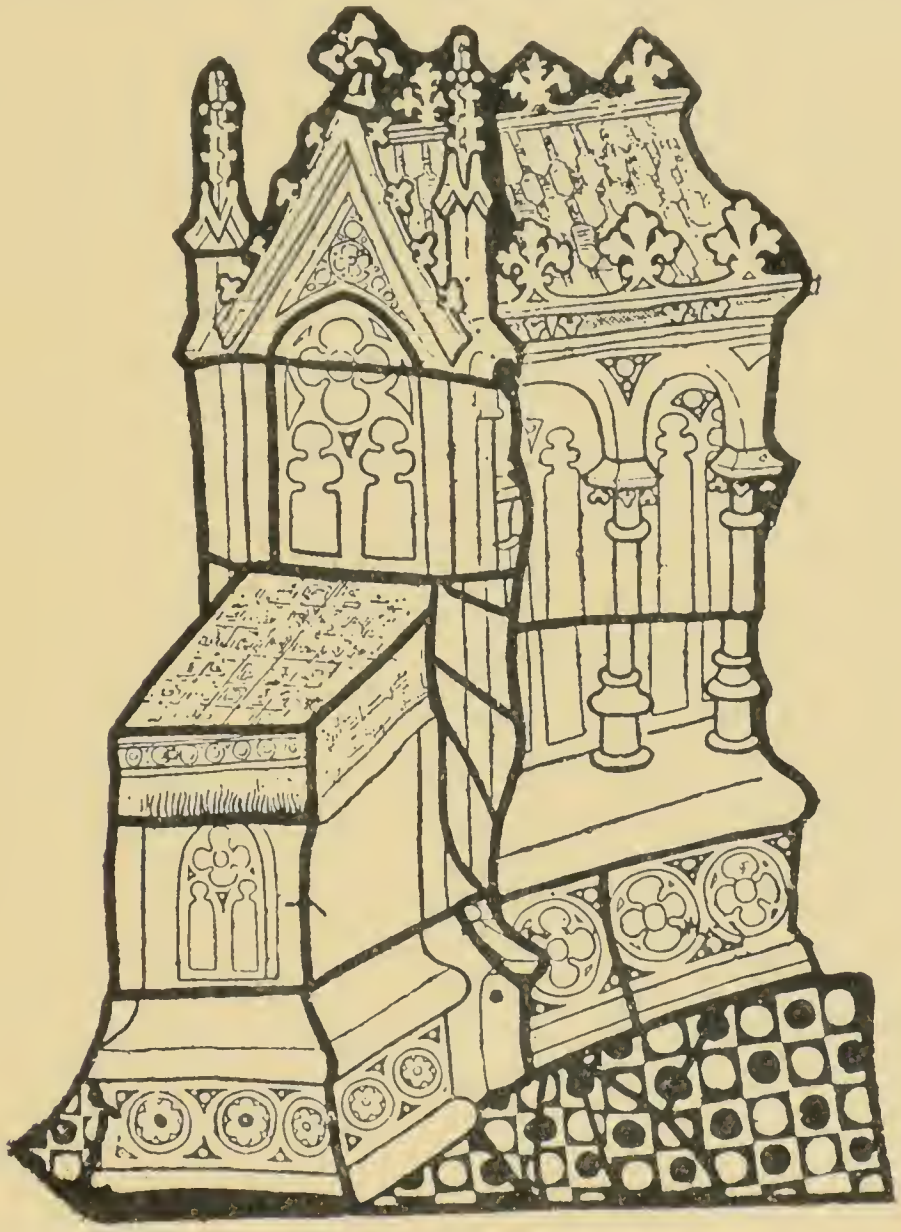
ST. WILLIAM

St. William's was *the* shrine in York Minster, which, however, does not appear to have been nearly so rich in such possessions as the metropolitan church of the south.

A simple grave in the nave of the cathedral was the first resting-place of St. William (archbishop of York 1143–1154), and it was not until nearly a hundred and thirty years afterwards that his relics were raised to a lofty shrine by Archbishop Wickwaine, which was done in the presence of the King Edward and his queen. This translation was performed at the sole expense of that princely prelate, Antony Bek, bishop of Durham, who was afterwards created Patriarch of Jerusalem.

St. William's head was enclosed in a *chef* of silver gilt and encrusted with jewels. So rich an object aroused the envy of Dr. Layton, one of Henry the Eighth's commissioners for the visitation of monasteries and a servile creature of Cromwell's, who had been raised to the Deanery of York. He petitioned for and obtained a special grant of this reliquary *for the use of the cathedral.*

To preserve the relics with reverend care? No; the man who pawned the altar plate of the cathedral when he gained the deanery, whose personal conduct and irreverent behaviour towards everything sacred in his visita-



THE SHRINE OF ST. WILLIAM
From a window in York Minster
By permission from Westlake, *Painted Glass*

tions were notorious, only wanted this reliquary for the riches thereon; and it may well be presumed that it was promptly taken to pieces and sold to the highest bidder.

The relics from the great shrine were buried in the

nave, under a large spotted marble slab. In May, 1732, this grave was opened by Drake, the historian, who found a leaden box containing a number of bones huddled carelessly together without any order or arrangement.[1]

ST. RICHARD

"In the first place, to the Most High Trinity and to the Blessed Mary I commend and bequeath my soul, and my body to be buried in the great church of Chichester, in the nave of the said church near the altar of the blessed Edmund the Confessor, hard by the column."

So ran the will of Bishop Richard. He died near Dover in 1253, but was buried according to his will.

He was canonised in 1260, and the relics must have been exhumed and placed in a feretory on the tomb until a fitting shrine could be built for its reception.

In 1270 Bishop Stephen required the dean and chapter to find and perpetually maintain ten square tapers to burn before the feretory on great feasts, and two round tapers before the same feretory, three before the tomb of the aforesaid saint, and nine tapers about the feretory weighing two pounds, to burn continually night and day on festivals of the first, second, and third dignity.

June 16th, 1276, was a great festal day at Chichester. The shrine was finished and the translation of St. Richard took place. The king and queen and their court attended the ceremony. The archbishop and nine bishops were present. It was a great occasion and the bishop spent 1,000 marks upon it. The feretory was silver gilt and richly jewelled.

The shrine was situated at the east of the high altar on a raised platform, which filled one entire bay behind the reredos, and was reached by two flights of steps on the

[1] *Hist. and Ant. of York.*

east side. An altar stood at the west of the shrine, and a watch-loft was erected, which latter was removed so late as 1820.

The throng of pilgrims was so great that the body of St. Richard was dismembered, and three stations were made—the tomb of St. Richard, the shrine, and the head in a separate reliquary.

To judge by his visits and his offerings at the shrine the king must have had a great veneration for this saint. In 1280 he ordered that certain jewels which had been taken from the shrine were to be refixed to the feretory, and six years later, when he was at Chichester, on the festival of St. Richard, the gifts of the Royal Family were recorded in the Wardrobe Accounts. The king offered a golden clasp, which cost him 106*s.* 8*d.*,[1] and Prince Edward another of the value of 100*s.* A damsel named Ediliva offered two clasps for the princesses Maria and Elizabeth; these were valued at 36*s.* of the money of that time. Master Robert le Normand offered three clasps for the other daughters of the sovereign — Alionora, Johanna, and Margaret. Eight years after the king gave a jewel made out of a vase found at Edinburgh.

Edward I., although engaged in the Scotch war, sent an offering from Newcastle—November, 1297—with particulars as to its subdivision, and the place for each gift. Roger de Barnely faithfully fulfilled his mission, and in the king's name gave 7*s.* at the shrine, with a clasp and cloth of gold, and 7*s.* to both the head and the tomb.

Two years after this the king was there in person, and on June 28th he gave—

"In oblations at the feretory on one side of S. Richard 7*s.*, and on the other side 7*s.*, and to the mitre of the same saint 7*s.*, and to the head of the same saint and to the tomb where

[1] Moneys of the thirteenth century multiplied by twenty-four will approximately give the relative value.

S. Richard was first buried 7*s.*, and to the mitre of S. Edmund and to the chalice of S. Richard 7*s.* ; sum total, 42*s.*"

Again, on June 6th, 1299, we find four cloths were delivered to Ralph de Manton for oblations at the shrine for the Lord Edward, Prince of Wales, which were probably for the feast of the translation, and 7*s.* was offered both at the tomb and the reliquary of the head.

A minstrel, with his harp, was stationed at the shrine, and one named Loull was singing the praises of the saint when he received a guerdon of 6*s.* 6*d.* from the king on May 26th, 1297.

On April 3rd—St. Richard's Day—the concourse of pilgrims was of such magnitude that in 1478 Bishop Storey made stringent rules whereby the crowds might approach the shrine in seemly order. The pilgrims were accustomed to carry staves, and the struggles for precedence led to the free use of these on each others' heads, often leading to serious injury, and in one case even death. The bishop directed that, instead of staves, they should carry crosses and banners, and the members of the several parishes should approach reverently from the west door in prescribed order, of which notice was to be given by the parish priests in their churches on the Sunday preceding the festival. The procession on Whit-Sunday he required should meet in the choir and proceed through the chancel and nave.

Not only were the pilgrimages voluntary, but occasionally compulsory by way of penance; and we find the Earl of Arundel obtaining absolution only on this condition, for poaching on the bishop's preserves in Hoghton chace.[1]

Among prominent offerings Bishop de Lenne (1362–1369) gave a silver image of the value of ten marks to

[1] *Archæologia*, v. 45, p. 176.

the feretory, and Theobald Evyas (1478) left his cross of gold, which he wore about his neck, to the shrine of St. Richard.

When in the fifteenth century Chichester Cathedral was in need of repair, offerings for that purpose were encouraged by granting indulgences to pilgrims to the shrine at Whitsuntide and on Trinity Sunday, and in 1480 St. Richard's Pence amounted to £5 2*s.* 6*d.*, and in a later year to £7 8*s.* 6*d.*

In the sixteenth century this beautiful structure went the way of all shrines. The last heard of it is in the communication made by the visitors of Henry VIII.

"COMMISSION FOR TAKING DOWN S. RICHARD'S SHRINE.

"Henry 8 to our trusty and well beloved servant Sir Wm. Goring, kt. and . . . Erneley, Esq. For as much as we have been lately informed that in our city of Chichester and Cathedral Church of the same there hath been used long heretofore and yet at this daye is used much superstition and certain kynd of idolatry aboute the shryne and bones of a certain bishop of the same, which they call S. Richard, and a certain resort thither of sundry our subjects, which being men of simplicitie, by the inculcation of certain of the clerge, who, taking advantage of the same, doo seke at the said shryne and bones of the same that God only hathe aucthoritie and power to grant, We, wylyng such superstitious abuses and idolatries to be taken away, command you with all convenient diligence to repayre unto the said cathedral church of Chichester and there to take down that shrine and bones of that bishop called S. Richard within the same, with all the sylver, gold, juells, and ornamentes to the same shryne belongyng, and also all other reliques and reliquaries, with all the plate, gold, juells, ornamentes aforesaid, to be safely and surely conveighed and brought into our Tower of London, there to be bestowed as we shall further determine at your arrival. And also that y^e^ shall see bothe the place where the same shryne standeth to be raysed and deffaced even to the very ground, and all such other

images of the church as any notable superstition hath been used to be taken and conveighed away. The 14th day of November, in ye 30th year of Hen. VIII.

"Thomas Cromwell."[1]

The shrine was destroyed, and the following inventory made by the Commissioners:—

"Hereafter folowyth the juells of gold, sylver, relykks, ornamentes, and other juells taken from the shryne in the Cathedrall Churche of Chichester the ffryday the xxth day of November, the xxxth yere of the reyne of Henry the VIII., by Wyllm. Gorgny, knygth, and Willm. Erneley, esquyer, commyssioners unto our said lord the Kynge, to take down the seid shryne, with all suche gold, sylver, juells, relykks, and ornamentes of the same, and the same shryne to be raysd and defaced, as more pleynly apperith by the said commission, the which gold, sylver and other jewells remaynyth in vi cofers, a caskett, and in a litell boxe. Item, first in a shippe cofer lv ymages sylver and gylt. Item, in a longe cophyn wheryn byshopp Rychards bones were in lvi ymages sylver and gylt. Item, iii other cofers full of broken sylver. Item, a cover with iii lokks that was delyvered by the deane and archedekyn with relykks and other jewells parcell of the seid shryne. Item, in a litell boxe xxxi ryngs with stonys, and iii other jewells. Item, in a casket xli jewells sett with stonys and perlys."[2]

Goring and Erneley received from the king for "disgarnishing of the shrine at Chichester and bringing the same to the Tower of London, £40."[3]

Last of all the dean and chapter had to defray the cost of repairing much of the mischief wrought in the progress of sacrilege:—

"1544. Unto Wolsey the masson, for amendynge of the Tumbe in our Lady Chapel, that was broken uppe when the

[1] *Lamb. MS.* 577, fo. 73, Draft of Privy Signet or King's Warrant, n. 671, Pub. Rec. Off.

[2] *Chap. Ho. Books*, Pub. Rec. Off., A. $\frac{3}{12}$ fo. 102.

[3] *Arundel MS.* 97.

Commissioners were here from the Councell to serche for the same, xvd."

By which it is evident that the tomb of Bishop Gilbert de Sancto Leofardo was rifled by mistake. Other repairs necessitated by the violence of that visitation are also recorded.[1]

ST. HUGH

The canons of Lincoln minster were rich in the possession of the bodies of four reputed saints. Two of these, both of the name of Hugh, were duly canonised, and the other two—John of Dalderby and Robert Grosseteste—both prelates of Lincoln, had been acclaimed saints by the voice of the people. The relics of St. John had indeed been enshrined in a feretory of silver; but Bishop Robert was left to repose in his tomb, around which pilgrims gathered as freely as though his sanctity was properly accredited from Rome.

It was, however, the shrine of St. Hugh the bishop which attracted as great attention in that part of the country as did St. Thomas of Canterbury in the south.

St. Hugh was one of the first promoters, if not designers, of our Early English style of architecture; and the grand cathedral, of vast dimensions, which he built must now be considered as his shrine, seeing that his golden feretory found its way through the mint into the purse of King Henry VIII.

St. Hugh died in the Temple in London, but his body was taken to his own cathedral for burial, and a circumstance is recorded which was considered extraordinary and attributed to his great holiness. During the four days' journey to Lincoln, the tapers which were borne around the bier burnt continually "so that they were not at any

[1] *Compotus* 35 Hen. VIII.

time without the light of one of the tapers, although the weather was often unusually bad on account of the wind and rain."[1]

The virtues of St. Hugh were so great that even King John was affected thereby, and he convened an assembly for political purposes at Lincoln, so that there should be a brilliant gathering to do honour to St. Hugh when his relics were brought into the city. On the 23rd of November, 1200, King John and William King of Scots, with the two English archbishops and one foreign, thirteen bishops and a great concourse of nobles and clergy, went out to receive the body, and the two kings with certain earls carried the coffin on their shoulders to the door of the cathedral.

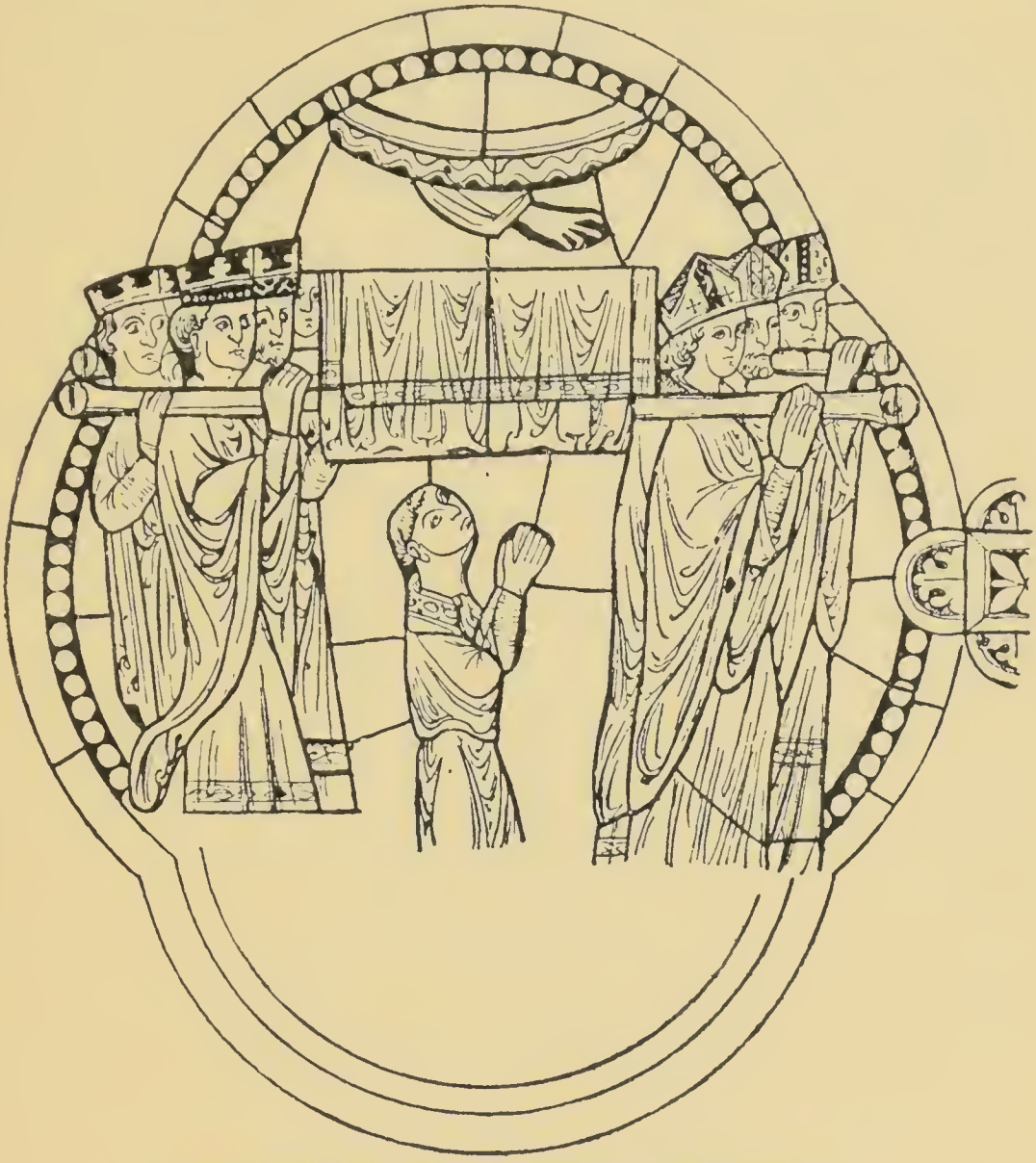
The northern apse of the north-east transept was dedicated to St. John the Baptist, and near this altar of his patron saint was the first tomb of St. Hugh. Shortly after his burial the chapel was enlarged to accommodate the pilgrims who flocked to his tomb, and an altar, dedicated to St. Hugh, was raised in the adjoining apse.

The canonisation of St. Hugh in 1220 gave such an impetus to the pilgrimages to his shrine that the enlargement of the church was rendered necessary by the increased throngs of the faithful.

The beautiful Angel Choir which was now built may—in a liberal sense—also be looked upon as the shrine of this far-famed saint, for it was expressly constructed to receive the feretory of St. Hugh. Behind the high altar the new shrine was erected, and on the 6th of October, 1280, the translation of the relics took place. As at the entombment, so at this translation, the function was of exceptional grandeur. The whole cost of this magnificent ceremonial was borne by Thomas Bek, who had that day been consecrated in the minster to the see of St. Davids. He

[1] Matt. Paris.

proved to be a munificent prelate, who did things so thoroughly that, while associating with the princes of the land, he remembered the poorer brethren, and to make it a day of rejoicing to them he caused two of the conduits in



THE FERETORY OF ST. HUGH IN PROCESSION
From a window in Lincoln Cathedral
By permission from Westlake, *Painted Glass*

Lincoln to run with wine.[1] Edward I. and his queen, Edmund his brother and the queen of Navarre were present with most of the dignitaries of the realm, both cleric and lay.

[1] *Gerald Camb.*, vii. 219, 220, Rolls Series.

It was presumably on this occasion that the head of St. Hugh was taken from the feretory and put into a separate head reliquary of gold and precious stones. During the episcopate of John Bokyngham, 1363–1398, the head of St. Hugh in its golden reliquary was stolen. In this case it was not for the sake of the relic but for the riches of the shrine; for the thieves, after stripping off the gold and jewels, flung the head into a meadow, where, we are told, it was guarded by a crow until it was recovered and taken back to the cathedral.

At this time the treasurer of the cathedral was John of Welbourn, a great benefactor to the church. Among other costly works enumerated in the Chapter Records—in which we find he was the custodian of the relics of St. Hugh—it is chronicled that he covered the two sides of the great shrine, which had hitherto been painted, with plates of pure gold, and placed an image of St. Paul within a niche or tabernacle on the north side of the feretory. He also made a canopy of wood to cover the upper part of the shrine.

The head of St. Hugh, which had been stolen and despoiled, he again decorated with gold, silver, and precious stones.

In the inventories of the cathedral are enumerated some of the jewels with which this *chef* was decorated.

"Item iiij rynges of gold with iiij preciouse stones belonging to the same hede.

"Item . . . of gold.

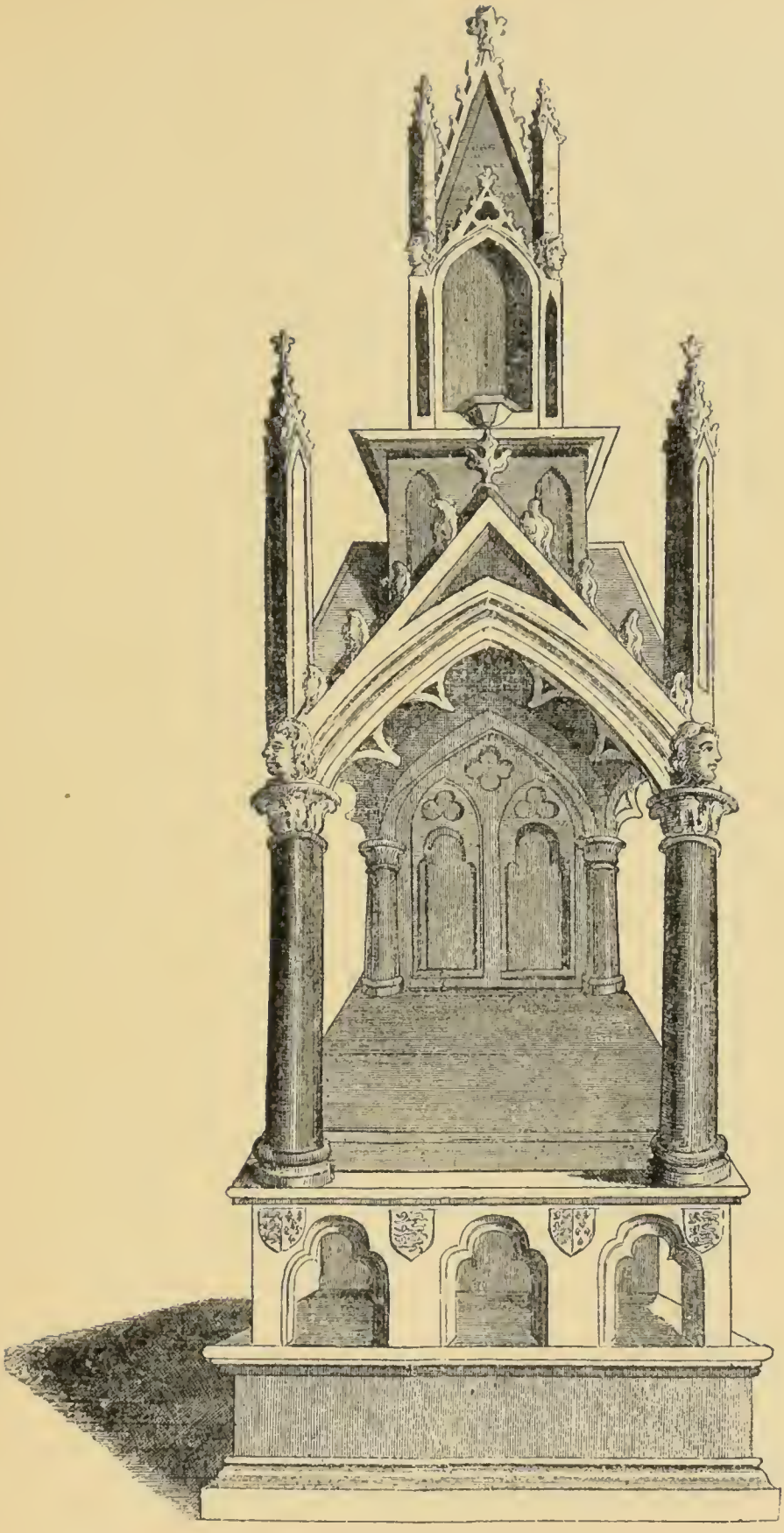
"Item thre old nobles & two ducates of gold nailed opon the bre (deth of) seint hugh hede.

"Item a rynge of gold with one oriant saphir standing (upon the) top of the mytre of seint hugh hede.

"Item two plaites of gold. . . ."

For the great shrine:—

"Item two braunches of gold with a braunche of corall . . . the shryn."



SHRINE OF ST. HUGH
From Stukeley's Itinerarium Curiosum

It also includes two smaller reliquaries associated with the same saint :—

"Item a toyth of seint hugh closed in byrall with silver & gilt.

"Item oyle of seint hugh in birrall closed with silver & gilt."

The accounts of the receipts and expenditure at St. Hugh's shrine, which were balanced half-yearly—at Pentecost and on October 9th—are preserved in the Muniment Room[1] for the years 1334 to 1494, 1510 to 1517, and 1520 to 1532.

The shrine of the other saint of the same name, known as "Little St. Hugh," was erected in the south aisle of the choir. This boy is *said* to have been crucified by the Jews in 1255 in revenge for the wrongs sustained by that people. The body, it was believed, was thrust down a well, but being discovered by Christians it was solemnly interred in the cathedral. The arcade on the outside of the parclose screen of the choir was removed from the third bay, and in its place was substituted a more elaborate arcade with geometrical tracery and canopied headings, enriched with the ball flower and with large-leaved finials, which, by traces remaining, was painted and gilded. This formed the back of the shrine of Little St. Hugh. In front of this a canopied tomb was built, which is supposed to have been surmounted by an effigy.

A mutilated statue of a child, still preserved, is said formerly to have been on the tomb. The figure, which shows the wounds of the nails, is of freestone—painted —twenty inches high ; the right hand is raised in benediction, but the head is broken off.

The base of the shrine remains, and when it was removed during the repairing of the cathedral in 1790 a stone coffin was found inside, lying on a level with the

[1] B. i. 5, 16.

pavement. The coffin contained a complete skeleton of a boy 3 feet 3 inches in length, corresponding in every respect with the traditions of over five centuries.

"St. Hugh of Lincoln, Martyr," still finds a place in some calendars on the 29th of June.

The origin and growth of this cruel fiction which led to the death of so many Jews has been historically and conclusively treated. The true story of Little St. Hugh, the Lincoln boy, who lost his life in August, 1255, by an accidental fall into the cesspool of a house belonging to a Jew, whereby on a false charge many Jews lost their lives, has been recently brought to light, on historical and convincing lines, by Mr. Joseph Jacobs.[1]

The third shrine in Lincoln Cathedral was of St. John of Dalderby, bishop of that see from 1300 to 1320. He was buried in the south transept, but by the numerous miracles said to have taken place at his tomb the faithful of the diocese quite determined, without the aid of the Pope, that he was numbered among the saints, and in the old-fashioned way—before the elaborate ceremonial of canonisation was introduced—he was declared a saint, and his relics were translated to a "massey silver" feretory, enriched with diamonds and rubies. This rested on a basement of rare marble, and was surmounted by an elaborate canopy, and the whole was surrounded by rails of silver gilt. The basement and supports on which the feretory rested may still in part be seen against the west wall of the south transept.

These three shrines, two of prelates and one of a child, have been classed together, seeing that they rested beneath one roof, and that two of them were spoliated at one visitation. It in some measure exposes the real principles of Henry VIII. in his wholesale destruction of the shrines of saints, when it is observed that the shrine of Little

[1] *Jewish Ideals and other Essays* (1896), pp. 192–224.

St. Hugh, on which we hear of no gold, silver, or jewels being lavished, was not mutilated until the Great Rebellion, while the precious feretories of St. Hugh and St. John, and probably their relics, were utterly destroyed. The official documents of this period, such as the following, are eloquent witnesses against the purity of Henry's motives.

"Henry the Eighth, by the grace of God, King of England & of France, Defender of the Faith, Lord of Ireland, & in earth, immediately under Christ, supreme head of the Church. To our trusty & well beloved doctor George Hennage, clerk, archdeacon of Taunton, John Hennage, & our well beloved servants John Halleley & Robert Draper, greeting. For as much as we understand that there is a certain shrine & divers feigned relics & jewels in the cathedral church of Lincoln, with which all the simple people be much deceived & brought into great superstition & idolatry, to the dishonour of God, & great slander of this realm, & peril of their own souls, we let you wit, that we being minded to bring our loving subjects to the right knowledge of the truth, taking away all occasions of idolatry & superstition; for the especial trust & confidence we have in your fidelities, wisdoms, & discretions, have, & by these presents, do authorise, name, assign, & appoint, you four or three of you, that immediately upon the sight hereof, repairing to the said cathedral church, & declaring unto the dean, residentiaries, & other ministers thereof, the cause of your coming is to take down as well the said shrine & superstitious relics, as superfluous jewels, plate, copes, and other such like as you shall think by your wisdoms not meet to continue or remain there. Unto the which, we doubt not, but for the considerations afore rehearsed, the said dean & residentiaries, with other, will be conformable & willing thereunto; & so you to proceed accordingly. And to see the said relicks, jewels, and plate, safely & surely to be conveyed to our Tower of London, unto our jewel house there, charging the master of our jewels with the same. And further, we will that you charge & command in our name, that the said dean there, to take down such monuments as may give any occasion of

memory of such superstition & idolatry hereafter; streightly charging & commanding all majors, sheriffs, bailiffs, constables, & all other officers, ministers, & subjects unto whom in this case it shall appertain, that unto you, & every of you, as they shall be by you required, they be abiding, helping, favouring, & assisting, as they will answer unto us for the contrary in their perils.

"Yeoven under our privy seal, at our palace of Westminster, the sixth day of June, in the two & thirtieth year of our reign (1540)."

By virtue of this commission there was taken out of the cathedral of Lincoln, on the 11th of June, 1540, 2,621 ounces of gold, and 4,285 ounces of silver, besides a great number of pearls and precious stones which were of great value, as diamonds, sapphires, rubies, turky carbuncles, etc.

"There were at that time two shrines in that cathedral church; the one of pure gold, called S. Hugh's Shrine, standing on the back-side of the high altar near unto Dalison's tomb; the place is easily to be known by the irons yet fastned in the pavement stones there.

"The other, called S. John of Dalderby his Shrine, was of pure silver, standing in the south-end of the great cross isle, not far from the door where the gallery court is used to be kept." [1]

After the Restoration Bishop Fuller erected a memorial —a slab of black marble on four small pillars of veined marble—over the spot he presumed the relics of St. Hugh to have been buried, inscribed with Latin verse stating that the saint's body lay beneath. This caused Leland to write that "S. Hugh lay in the Body of the Est Porte of the Chirche above the Highe Altare," but when search was made in 1886, an unsoldered leaden coffin was found within one of stone which contained nothing but decayed vestments of rich material.

[1] *Inventories of Cathedral Church of Blessed Mary of Lincoln.*

At the easternmost part of the cathedral, adjoining the west end of Bishop Burghersh's tomb, is a structure of the middle of the fourteenth century, which appears to have been the base of a portable shrine. It has two niches on the north side and one in the front for the pilgrims. Over the arches are shields bearing the instruments of the Passion, and the pavement in front is very much worn. This was probably the base of the Shrine of the Head.

ST. THOMAS OF HEREFORD

The reputation of Hereford was already assured by the possession of the relics of St. Ethelbert, King and Martyr (see page 214), but in the destruction of the cathedral in 1055 it appears that his shrine had been destroyed and apparently one of his teeth was the only surviving relic. Great, therefore, was the joy of the canons when they were able to count one of their own bishops among the saints and to erect a shrine to St. Thomas Cantilupe, which, although accounted of second importance to that of St. Ethelbert, was the means of enhancing their influence and attracting the offerings of pilgrims. Of this shrine we know the form and much of its decoration, partly through mention of it during the period of the veneration of the relics, partly from the record of its destruction, but more especially from that portion which yet remains. The very contentions between the chapter and the treasurer over the division of the offerings throws light on the life of the times and the exhibition of human passions.

Thomas de Cantilupe (1275–1282) was one of the greatest prelates of the age; but his episcopate was not altogether peaceful—integrity frequently finds enmity in the highest dignitaries—and it was to appeal against an unjust decree of the archbishop of Canterbury that Cantilupe journeyed to Rome. At Monte Fiascone, near

Florence, he died of a fever, and on Richard Swinfield, his attendant chaplain and successor in the see, devolved the care of bringing his bones back to England. He proceeded to separate the flesh of his body from the bones by the simple process of boiling. The flesh was buried in the church of the monastery of Santo Severo, near Orvieto, and on reaching England the heart was deposited in the college of Bonshommes at Ashridge, in Buckinghamshire, while the bones were brought to Hereford and placed in a sumptuous tomb in the Lady Chapel.

At the entrance to the cathedral miracles are reported to have begun. It is said that the Earl of Gloucester, who had encroached on the liberties of the church, was present at the ceremony, and that as he approached the casket containing the relics, blood began to flow from the bones; upon which the Earl restored the property he had unjustly seized. Veneration for his character and the circumstances of his death in defence of right, together with the report of cures at his tomb, exalted him to the ranks of the sanctified in the eyes of the whole diocese. Three hundred sick people are reported to have been cured at his tomb; his healing powers were said to be so great that Edward I. on two occasions made offerings for his sick falcons to be restored to health, and sent a waxen image of the ailing bird.

Five years later the relics were translated to a shrine in the chapel of St. Katherine in the north-west transept, in the presence of King Edward I., on Maundy Thursday, April 6th, 1287.

The number of pilgrims increased and the shrine became one of the most frequented in the West of England. It was the custom in cases of sickness to send or bring a wax taper of the height of the sufferer, and sometimes it corresponded with the dimensions of the whole body.[1]

[1] *Life and Gests, etc.*, p. 228.

The profits from these offerings of wax was claimed by the treasurer as his perquisites; but they became so considerable that it aroused the jealousy of the members of the chapter and led to so great a disagreement that it had to be settled by a mutual compact, in which it is stipulated that, after defraying the expense of lights at the tomb, the treasurer should receive two-thirds, and the chapter one-third of the profits arising from this source. This instrument, dated 3 Kal. May, 1289, is still extant (see page 144), and on the demise of the treasurer the agreement was renewed by his successor.

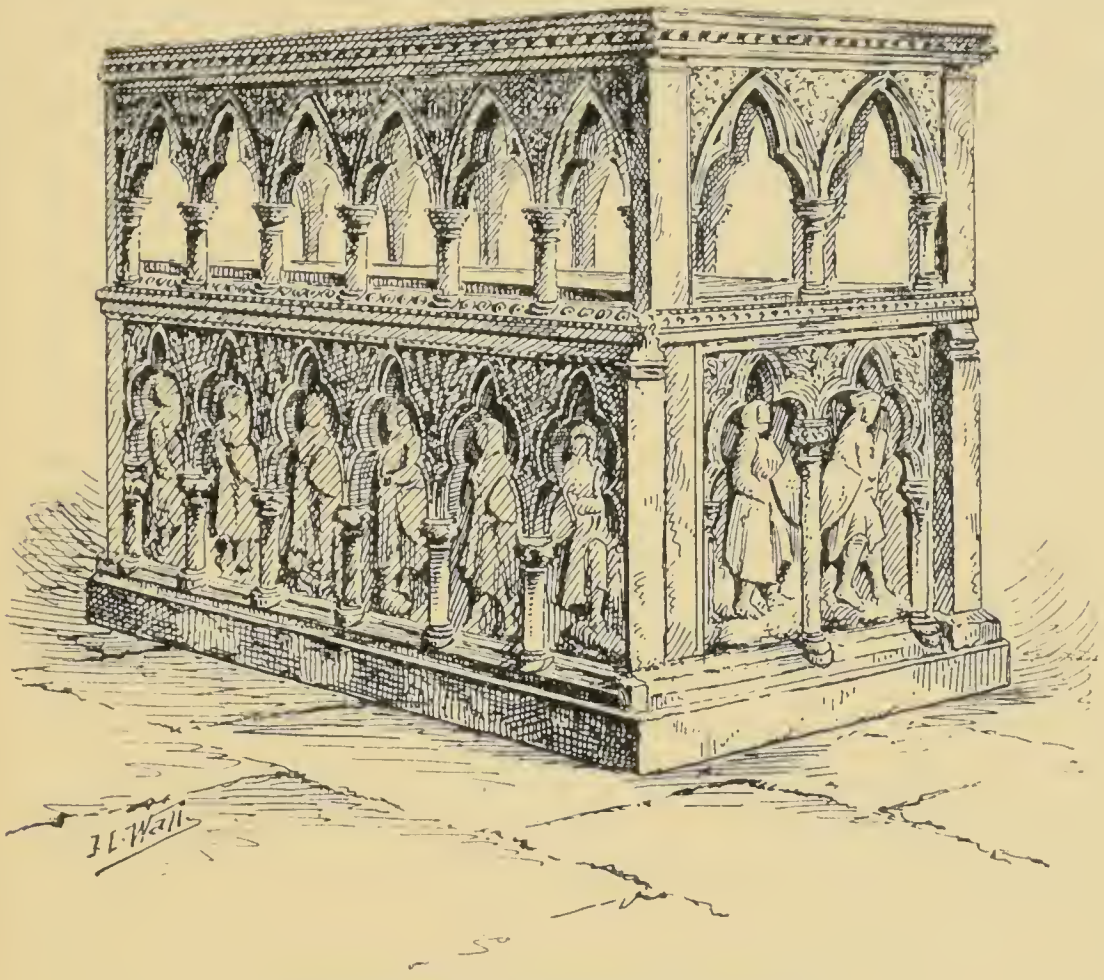
In the Taxation of Pope Nicholas a part of the treasurer's income is thus accounted for:—

> "Item. Thesaurarius recipit quasdam oblationes in cera de tumba Episcopi Thomæ quæ hoc anno taxantur ad . . . 13*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*"

The shrine was twice translated in the sixteenth century, first to its former site in the Lady Chapel, and again back to the north transept, where the pedestal, or throne, still remains.

The structural part of St. Thomas' shrine is different in design from any other of the great type which can be traced in England, excepting that of St. Frideswide at Oxford. It is a long parallelogram, narrowing towards the foot, and built entirely of Purbeck marble. It consists of two stages; the lower division resembles a high tomb, around which is a series of fourteen cinquefoiled niches containing figures of Knights-Templars in various attitudes, fully armed in chain mail with their feet resting on dragons and other monsters. Cantilupe was Provincial Grand Master of the Templars in England, and the figures representing that Order form a fitting decoration to his shrine. The spandrels of the arcade are filled with various kinds of foliage—the oak, maple, and clover.

On the upper slab of this tomb is the matrix of a brass of St. Thomas. The upper division consists of another slab supported by an open arcade, the spandrels containing leaves of the same foliage as those beneath, but formally arranged in rows. The adornments at the east end, or foot, have been destroyed and it is now plastered



SHRINE OF ST. THOMAS CANTILUPE
Hereford Cathedral

over. On this top slab rested the jewelled feretory of St. Thomas, which was carried in procession through the streets of the city in 1349 to stay the progress of the "Black Death," which pitiless visitation decimated the population.

The appearance of this feretory is not known. Bishop Booth left certain ornaments of gold and silver for its

enrichment; but it is only from the inventory of the jewels taken from it in the sixteenth century that an idea of its beauty can be gathered. In that are mentioned :—

"An image of the Trinity of gold with a diadem on His head with green stones and red, one oche on his breast with 5 stones and 3 pearls. A table of gold with green and other stones. A plain gold table. A child with the arms of the Marches with green and red stones. A table of gold with Jesus and Our Lady. A round oche compassed with pearls. The salutation of Our Lady. . . . 3, 1 with 3 sapphires and 1 emerald. A crucifix with emeralds and pearls. An oche to the same. An Agnus Dei with a chain of gold and 15 rings, some with stones, some without."[1]

Agreement between Luke de Bray, the treasurer, and the Chapter of Hereford respecting the offerings of wax at the tomb of Bishop Cantilupe.

"In Dei nomine, Amen. Cum nuper super oblationibus ceræ provenientibus ad tumbas bonæ memoriæ domini Thomæ de Cantilupo quondam Herefordensis episcopi, inter discretum virum, magistrum Lucam, thesaurarium Herefordensem asserentem dictas oblationes ad suam thesaurariam pertinere debere ex parte una, et capitulum ejusdem ecclesiæ asserens in usus communitatis ipsius debere converti, discordiæ materia esset suborta ex altera, tandem communibus amicis intervenientibus, magister Reginaldus de Heyton' procurator memorati thesaurarii habens specialem potestatem componendi et transigendi ab eodem thesaurario in præmissis, et capitulum antedictum, in hanc pacis schemam amicabiliter consenserunt : videlicet, ut prædictæ oblationes ceræ per unum deputandum a dicto thesaurario, et per alium deputandum a capitulo alternatim hinc inde juratos, fideliter colligantur, et custodiantur, et per eosdem, præhabito tamen consilio et præcepto thesaurarii et capituli, fiant expensæ luminariorum circa tumbas supradictas. Et deinde quod liberum super erit, in tres partes æqualiter dividatur, et duæ partes applicentur thesaurario, et tertia capitulo, et de ipsis fiat prout de partibus sic applicatis duxerint ordinandum.

[1] Record Office.

Per hanc autem compositionem, cedente prædicto Luca vel decedente, successoribus ipsius, vel ipsi capitulo, quoad jus seu possessionem in dictis oblationibus nullum præjudicium generetur, aut fiat, quo minus prosequi possint, seu debeant jus suum, prout eis videbitur expedire. In quorem omnium testimonium factum est quoddam instrumentum ad modum cyrographi confectum, cujus una pars sigillo Reginaldi procuratoris præfati signata, remanet penes capitulum, et altera pars sigillo capituli signata penes magistrum Lucam, thesaurarium memoratum. Acta et data in ecclesia cathedrali Herefordensi in pleno loci capitulo iij°. Kal. Maii, anno domini. M°. CC°. octogesimo nono."[1]

ST. AUGUSTINE

The shrine of the Italian apostle of the English, St. Augustine, and the possession of his relics, was the glory of that monastery which stood just without the walls of Canterbury.

The church was not built when St. Augustine died in 604, and his body was buried in the earth close to the spot where the walls of the sanctuary were rising under the hands of the industrious masons, and when, nine years after, it was consecrated to the honour of Sts. Peter and Paul the body was brought in and buried in the north apsidal chapel. The epitaph said by Bede to have been written on his tomb has been accounted by some antiquaries as spurious, but it may be considered undue boldness to contend against so venerable an authority on such a matter. That Doctor's record is :—

"Here rests the Lord Augustine, first Archbishop of Canterbury, who, being formerly sent hither by the blessed Gregory, bishop of the city of Rome, and by God's assistance supported by miracles, brought King Ethelbert and his nation from the worship of idols to the faith of Christ, and having ended the days of his office in peace, died on the 7th day before the Kalends of June, in the reign of the same king."

[1] *Reg. Swinfield*, f. 63 b.

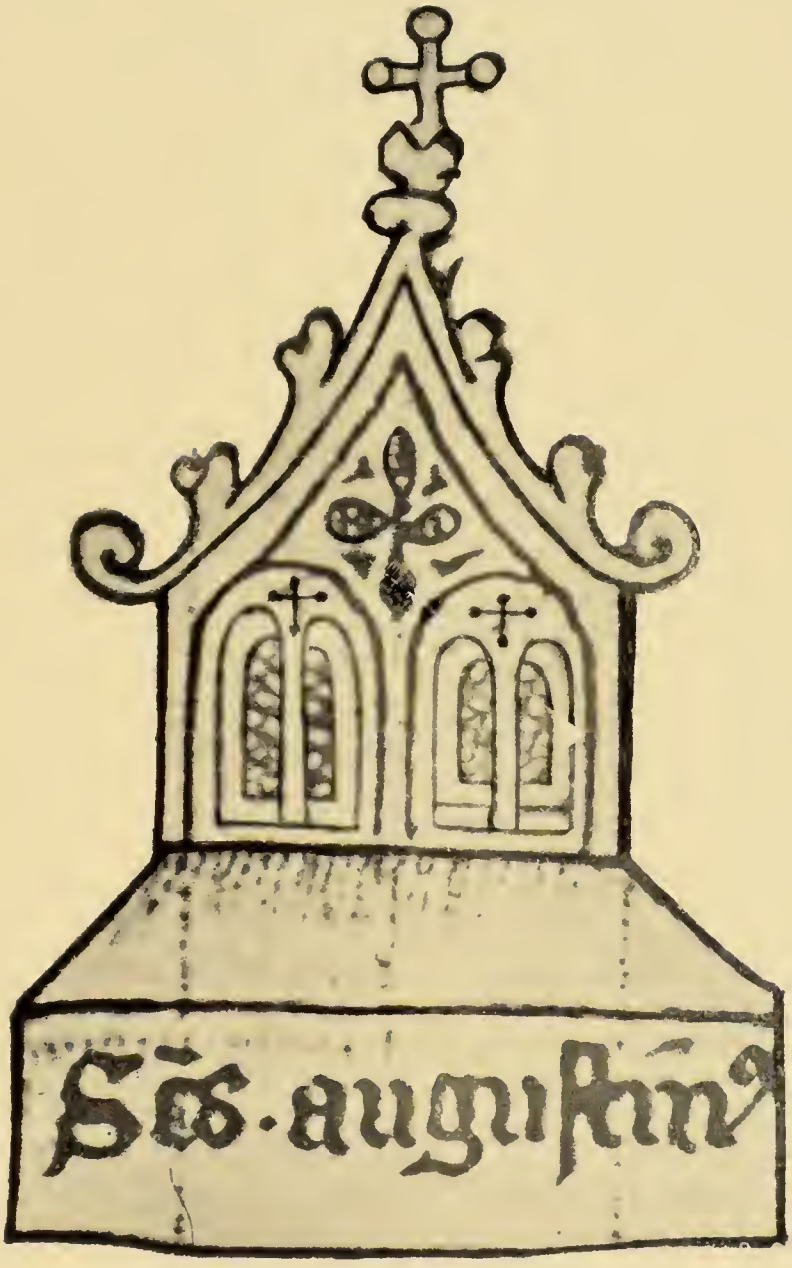
On September the 6th, 1091, the Abbot Wido (or Guido), leaving some part of the dust and smaller bones in the original place, translated the remainder into the principal church, placing them in a strong receptacle in the wall beneath the east window ; but further details of the manner in which this abbot deposited the relics are gathered from the account of the next translation in 1221.

"The Cycle of the Sun being 6, and the Dominical Letter C, on the 5th of the Kalends of May, John de Marisco, Prior of St. Augustine's in Canterbury, with the senior monks of his house, desiring to ascertain where the body of Augustine the Apostle, their patron, was deposited, acted on the advice of some of the brethren who recounted a threefold revelation said to have been vouchsafed to them—doubtless a tradition handed down since the last translation—and caused the wall beneath the middle window at the eastern extremity of the church to be broken through ; there they found a stone chest strongly secured with lead and iron, on which was this inscription :—

'Inclytus Anglorum Præsul, pius, et decus altum,
Hic Augustinus requiescit corpore sanctus.'"

On the morrow, after the celebration of a solemn Mass, still acting at the instigation of the brethren, the prior had a silver shrine removed and the stone substructure on which it stood broken open, when they found at the bottom of the heap of stones a huge leaden chest nearly seven feet in length, on which was written :—

"Be this accounted part of the bones and ashes of the blessed Augustine the Apostle of the English, who being formerly sent here by the blessed Gregory, converted the English nation to the Christian faith ; whose precious head and larger bones Guido the abbot hath honourably translated in another stone vessel, as by a leaden inscription placed on the vessel containing the said bones, is apparent, in the year of the Incarnation of our Lord MXCI."



THE SHRINE AND ALTAR OF ST. AUGUSTINE

ENLARGED FROM THE DRAWING IN MS., TRIN. HALL, CAM

This inscription, it will be seen, was in part copied by the Abbot Wido, or Guido, from the epitaph which had been over the grave in the chapel, as recorded by Bede.

In a third place—on the summit of the silver shrine—was found a small leaden chest, "wherein was contained a piece of his flesh not wholly reduced to earth, but appearing like moist mould wherein blood had been congealed," with this inscription : "This chest contains part of the dust of the blessed Augustine."

The silver shrine here mentioned was apparently part of the decoration of the monument, which contained the two leaden chests holding respectively some of the bones and the dust of St. Augustine.

All three reliquaries thus found were borne to the high altar. The large one from the bottom of the monument was too heavy to carry, so the lead was removed, and the stone chest from beneath the window, which contained the head and greater bones, was borne to the high altar with great veneration by the abbots of Battle and of Langdon, and the priors of St. Edmund of Feversham and of St. Radegund, the brethren of Sts. Peter and Paul, or St. Augustine's, as it was in future called, singing *Te Deum*.

The stone chest was placed on the high altar and opened. Within was found a thin plate of lead inscribed :—

"In the year of the Incarnation of our Lord MXCI., in the reign of William King of England, son to William the King who conquered the kingdom, the abbot Guido translated the body of the blessed Augustine from the place it had lain fifty years,[1] and deposited all the bones of that saint in the present chest, and many more parts of his holy body did the same abbot gather together into a silver shrine, to the glory of Him who reigns for ever."

[1] A chronological error.

As the relics had been found in three different places—"by a threefold revelation"—so now King Henry III. and the convent caused them to be honourably deposited in three places. The greatest part was laid beneath the silver shrine, strongly bound with iron and secured with lead ; the second part somewhat lower beneath the marble monument ; the third part—the head—was placed beneath the east window, and that this should be exposed for the veneration of the people, it was not enclosed in the wall, but placed in a feretory by Abbot Hugh, which he had decorated with gold and silver and precious stones at his own expense.

In this state they continued until Abbot Thomas Fyndon in 1300 enshrined the relics in a more sumptuous manner, and retaining the former epitaph, added another distich of his own :—

Abbot Wido { "Inclytus Anglorum Præsul pius, et decus altum,
Hic Augustinus requiescit corpore sanctus ;

Abbot Fyndon { Ad tumulum laudis Patris almi ductus amore
Abbas hunc tumulum Thomas dictavit honore."[1]

It is this shrine which is represented in the fifteenth-century drawing of St. Augustine's Abbey, holding the place of honour in the easternmost chapel (see page 20).

ST. DUNSTAN

St. Dunstan, one of the greatest of prelates, statesmen, moralists, artists, and musicians in this country's history, had a shrine raised to him which was also one of the greatest frauds by which the faithful of Glastonbury were deceived.

St. Dunstan died at Canterbury and was buried before the matin altar in the crypt of that cathedral. This tomb

[1] The renowned and pious saint Augustine, supreme head and high glory of the Angles, here rests in the body.
Led to the shrine by love of a bounteous Father's praise, Abbot Thomas built this present shrine with all honour.

was of stone, for we are told by Gervase that after the fire in 1012 and the rebuilding of the choir "the Master carefully prepared a resting-place for St. Dunstan and St. Elphege." The Prior Alan with nine of the brethren went by night to the tombs of the saints, and so that he might not be incommoded by a crowd, he locked the doors of the church. He then commanded that the stonework enclosing them be taken down, after which the stone coffins of the saints were opened and their relics borne to the vestry and deposited in wooden chests, covered within and without with lead: which chests, thus lead-covered and strongly bound with iron, were carried to the new choir, where they were enclosed in stonework which was consolidated with melted lead.

The shrine and altar of St. Dunstan were on the south of the high altar, those of St. Elphege on the north.

The choir of Canterbury was again destroyed by fire in 1174, but when the rebuilding was finished ten years after the shrines of these two saints retained the same positions as in the former choir.

Glastonbury Abbey, however, claimed to have possession of the relics of St. Dunstan, a saint whose youth and education had been entrusted to the monks of that house, and who had been one of their abbots. In the precincts of their abbey he had constructed bells and organs, therefore they held his memory dear and were proud of one of their number who had become so renowned. How and when they were said to have become possessed of such a treasure is so transparent an invention that the author of the story had to elaborate his romance by which to explain to the inquiring Glastonians the cause why no shrine had been raised to so great a saint before the year 1184.

The story is found in William of Malmesbury's *De Antiquitate Glastoniæ Ecclesiæ*, which he had probably

finished in 1135, but he is such a conscientious historian that we cannot look for such falsity from his pen. His original work has perished, and the earliest MS. which exists was transcribed some sixty years after the death of the author. In this transcript is interpolated so much that only those portions which are repeated in the *Gesta Regum* can be looked upon as Malmesbury's writings.

Glastonbury Abbey was destroyed by fire in 1184, the very year in which the relics of St. Dunstan were translated at Canterbury, and the idea then probably occurred to some of the Glastonbury monks to invent a discovery of their already boasted claim which would bring greater offerings to their church.

The Glastonbury account is that, after the burning of Canterbury by the Danes in 1011, King Edmund came to Glastonbury and related events to the abbot and monks of the monastery, who immediately entreated for permission to translate the bones of St. Dunstan from so insecure a place to the house of his youth. This obtained, certain monks were despatched to Canterbury—no mean journey in those days—yet they speak of the ruins of the cathedral as still smoking, and found amongst them the bones of St. Dunstan wrapped in cloth of gold and needlework.

Without delay they returned to Glastonbury with their precious burden, and when within a mile of the town sent one of their number to acquaint the convent of the success of their mission, that preparations might be made to give the relics a fitting reception. It was, however, needless. Long before the messenger arrived the bells of the abbey —of their own accord—burst into a joyous peal, and the larger bells in the great tower chimed in with sonorous accompaniment. The abbot and convent understood the miraculous intimation, and went forth in solemn procession to receive the relics with due honour.

To prevent the relics being again stolen by the monks of Canterbury it was decided that two of the brethren should bury them in a spot known only to themselves, and keep the secret the rest of their lives, and when one died the other was to select some trustworthy successor to whom he should disclose it, thereby ensuring that the secret should not be lost.

The two monks placed the bones in a wooden coffin painted on the inside in azure and vermilion. On the right side of the exterior they put S and on the left D, intending that the letters should stand for *Sanctus Dunstanus*. This was buried near the holy-water stoup by the door which gave entrance to the monks from the cloisters into the nave of the great church, and was covered with a stone.

There the relics lay for a hundred and seventy years, and we are told how a young monk wheedled the secret from an older monk and then told the others, and so it happened that after the fire the secret was known, or otherwise it would have been lost altogether. The ruins were searched, the ground was dug, and eventually everything was found as described. The relics were put into a splendid feretory of gold and silver, and became the object of many pilgrimages. Early in the fourteenth century Abbot Breynton spent 500 marks on the shrine, and so famed did it become that it roused the jealousy of the convent at Canterbury, who constantly sent protests to the Abbey of the West, but all to no purpose, until Archbishop Warham, as late as 1508, had a scrutiny made of the tomb attributed to St. Dunstan in his cathedral, and in his letter to Abbot Beere of Glastonbury, he describes how he found in a small wooden chest, girt with iron, a leaden cist containing the skull and bones and a plate of lead a foot long, inscribed "Hic requiescit Sanctus Dunstanus, Archiepiscopus," and he admonishes

the abbot to desist from any such claim. The abbot in his reply declared that the shrine had been set up in their church for over two hundred years with the sanction of his diocesan, *with power to move it from place to place*, by which we learn that it was a movable feretory. The archbishop eventually forbade the abbot, on pain of excommunication, to assert his possession of the remains of St. Dunstan.[1]

On the south wall of the choir at Canterbury, between the monuments of Archbishops Stratford and Sudbury, is some diapered stonework, which is doubtless the remains of the pedestal of St. Dunstan's shrine.

The head of St. Dunstan was enclosed in a separate *chef* of silver by Archbishop Warham.

The shrine of St. Elphege on the north side of the choir has been totally destroyed.

ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY

Everything connected with that very human saint, but genuine patriot, St. Thomas à Becket, is of interest to Englishmen. He had fallen in a conflict for the Church against State tyranny, and in his fall he triumphed.

Although with the changed times and laws there cannot be precisely the same contention in these days, the same principles exist. He combated the violation of the constitutions of the country, and was properly considered the martyr of national liberty. His cause placed St. Thomas in a peculiar position among the saints. As such a champion his became the most popular and revered name in the English Calendar—and not only in England—for

[1] This scrutiny was made on April 22nd, 1508. An account of it, and part of the correspondence with Glastonbury, has been printed by Wharton —*Anglia Sacra*, ii. 227. The full account will be found in MS. E. 27, and in *Register* R. ff. 183-188b, in the possession of the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury.

the events of the 29th of December, 1170, attracted the whole of Christendom.

During nearly four centuries—from his martyrdom to the reign of Henry VIII.—this saint's influence was so great that when that monarch determined to arrogate to himself the supreme spiritual authority he felt it necessary to break the spell of devotion to the champion of the spiritualities before he could be successful.

PILGRIM'S SIGN: ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY

So long as the name of St. Thomas remained in the calendar it would stimulate both the clergy and laity alike to oppose his acts of sacrilege. His name was accordingly ordered to be erased from all books on pain of heavy penalties, and his shrine—the visible monument of his courage—the continual reminder of successful opposition to tyranny—was utterly destroyed; while his relics—the relics of one who was considered the people's champion, whose merits would further their prayers at the

heavenly throne, as his unflinching boldness had obtained their rights at the earthly court—were burnt and scattered.

The martyrdom of Archbishop Thomas was one of the most thrilling events in the history of England—aye, and of all Christendom. This is no place to dwell upon the tragedy, except so far as it led to the making of a series of shrines for the one saint.

It was the hour of evensong when St. Thomas fell, under the repeated blows of the four cowardly assassins, on the pavement of the north transept of the cathedral, just without the chapel of St. Benedict, the tonsured crown severed from the skull by the sword of Le Breton.

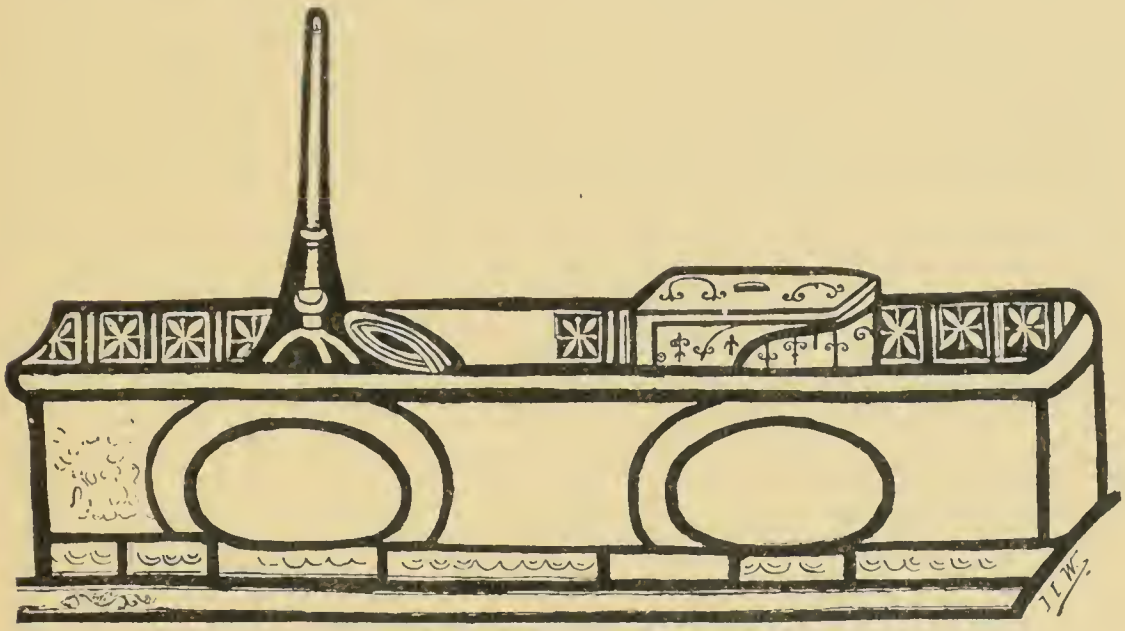
The body of the murdered man lay for some time deserted by all, but towards midnight Osbert, the archbishop's chamberlain, crept into the church and tore off a strip of his surplice to cover the mutilated head. Finding it safe to enter, the monks, with loud lamentations, collected the scattered brains and placed the body on a bier in front of the high altar, with vessels beneath to receive the blood still dropping from the wound. Round the site of the murder they placed some moveable benches to keep off the crowd of townsmen, who were tearing off pieces of their garments and dipping them in the blood.

On the following morning the monks received a message from Robert de Broc, one of the assassins, forbidding them to bury the body among the tombs of the archbishops, and threatened that if they did so he would drag it out, hang it on a gibbet, tear it with horses, cut it to pieces, or throw it out to be devoured by swine. The monks hurriedly closed the doors, and carried the body to the crypt, where they had determined to give it burial.

Over the hair-cloth shirt, religious habit, and linen hose they put those vestments in which he had been

consecrated, and which had been preserved by him for this purpose, and laid him in a new marble coffin in the old crypt behind the chapel of Our Lady Undercroft, between the altars of St. Augustine and St. John the Baptist.

The crypt remained closed until the 2nd of April, when the public were admitted and miracles were reported. This roused the anger of De Broc, who threatened to deprive them of their treasure. To avoid this the



TOMB OF ST. THOMAS
From a window in the Trinity Chapel, Canterbury

frightened monks hastily removed the body into a wooden coffin, which they hid and watched through the night; but the next day they replaced it and built walls of massive stone around the sarcophagus, leaving two oval openings through which pilgrims might touch the tomb. The remains of the brains and blood were placed in vessels on the top of the tomb.

A contemporary representation of this first shrine of St. Thomas is yet left to us in one of the cathedral windows. It shows the two oval openings—through one

of which King Henry thrust his head and shoulders when he received the scourge in penance—the green vessel containing the brains, a taper in a candlestick and a trindle, or votive offering of a coil of wax.

After his penance King Henry offered at this tomb four marks of pure gold and a silk hanging to adorn it; also £40 annually for lights to be kept burning around the shrine. Louis VII., the first French king to set foot on this island, came to implore St. Thomas's intercession for the recovery of his son, and presented to the shrine the celebrated jewel known as the "Regale of France," his own golden goblet, and many other gifts. Richard, after his return from the Holy Land, and John after his coronation, also came here as pilgrims.

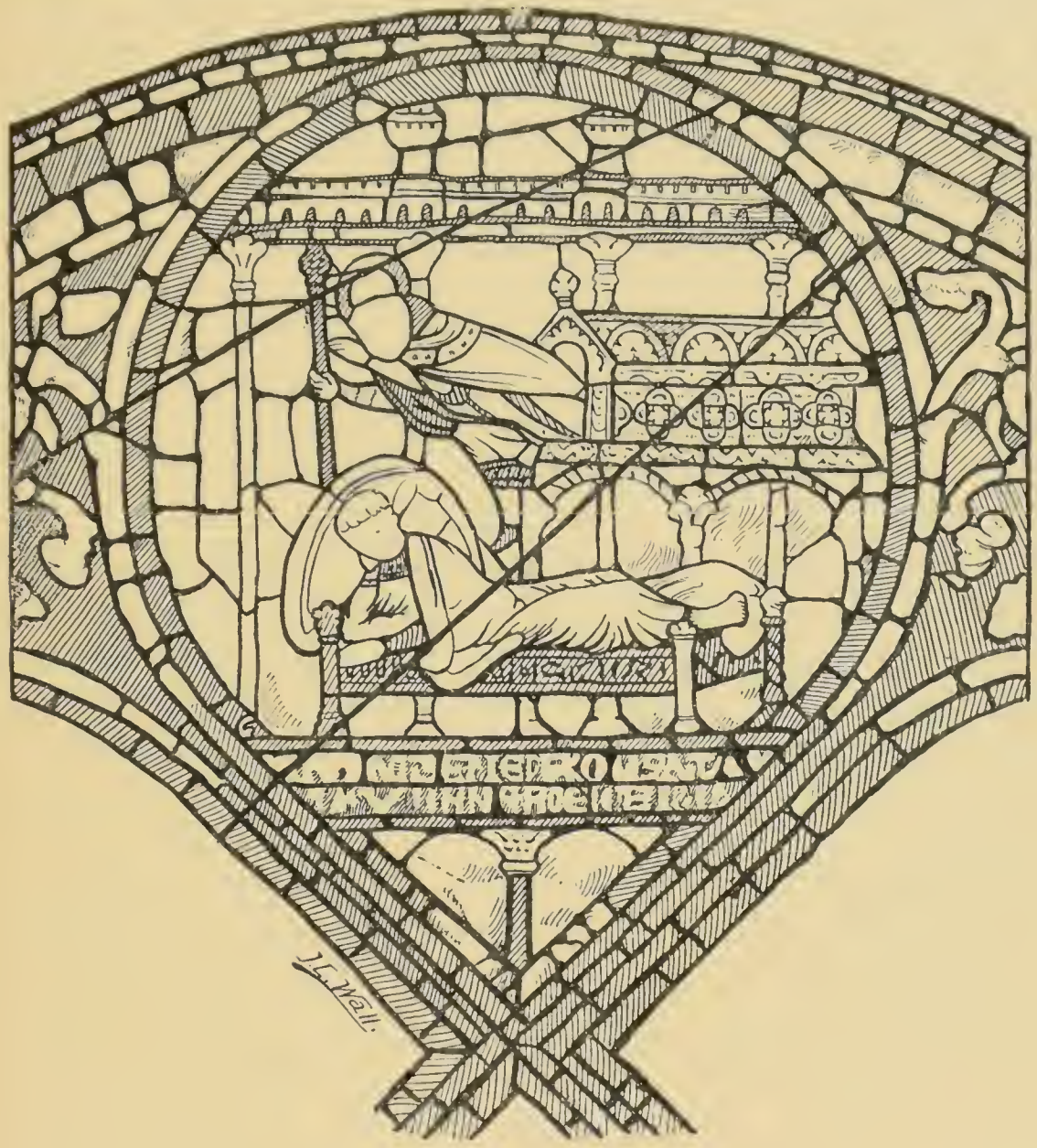
This portion of the crypt would probably have remained the most important part of the church but for the fire of 1174. A more gorgeous monument was contemplated at this place, but the fire altered the plans of the monks and presented the opportunity for greater magnificence in the design.

"The Martyrdom" in the transept was considered the most sacred spot, and in 1172 a piece of the stone in the pavement on which St. Thomas was martyred—and said to be stained with his blood—was sent to Pope Alexander III. and deposited in the church of Sta. Maria Maggiore.[1] In the following year Thomas à Becket was canonised—two years and three months after his death, one of the shortest periods between death and canonisation on record—but he was already canonised in the minds of the English people. In his bull of canonisation Pope Alexander bade the chapter, as soon as possible, to place the relics with great solemnity in some fitting shrine, and himself contributed two columns of pinkish marble from the ruins of ancient Carthage, which, however, were not

[1] This seems, however, to be a modern fable, originating in A.D. 1816.

used for that immediate purpose, but still form part of the surrounding arcade.

As soon as the cathedral church was reconsecrated after the sacrilege, a lowly wooden altar was raised close to the



SHRINE OF ST. THOMAS
From a window in the Trinity Chapel, Canterbury

scene of the murder. It was called the "Altar of the Martyrdom," and the "Altar of the Sword's Point," for upon it was a tabernacle containing the point of Le Breton's sword which had snapped off as it came in

contact with the pavement after giving the fatal blow. Upon this casket, under a piece of rock crystal, was preserved a portion of the martyr's brains. This was one of the minor shrines of St. Thomas at which numerous offerings were made.

Immediately after the fire, rebuilding and enlargement commenced. The chapel of the Blessed Trinity was made of ample dimensions for the shrine, and eastward of that was a circular chapel—which some have thought to be the actual Corona—known as "the Crown of St. Thomas" or "Becket's Crown."

During this time the tomb in the crypt was protected by woodwork, and the site of the new shrine in the church above was almost directly over the crypt tomb.

All things were now ready, and the 7th of July, 1220, the fiftieth year after the murder, was appointed for the translation. Archbishop Langton, two years previously, had proclaimed the event throughout Europe, and free provision was made for man and beast on all the roads approaching Canterbury.

On the evening of the 6th the archbishop, the bishop of Salisbury, the prior and the monks broke down the protecting wall around the tomb. Four priests then removed the relics from the marble coffin to a chest studded with nails, which was securely locked and laid in a chamber ready for the morrow.

Such an assembly as then congregated had never before gathered together in England. At the hour of Terce the bells pealed forth as the procession passed along the nave. It was headed by the young King Henry III., who, on account of his tender years, was not allowed to assist in carrying the feretory. Then followed Pandulf, the Legate, Archbishop Langton and the Primate of France; four of the highest nobles of the realm bore on their shoulders the reliquary containing the martyr's bones, and on either

side prelates carried tapers. All the bishops of England, save three, were assisting and many prelates from France.

During Mass the feretory rested beneath a canopy of cloth of gold, before an altar erected for the occasion in front of the choir screen, in sight of all the people; and it was afterwards deposited in the shrine prepared for it.

The elevated position of the chapel containing the shrine is unrivalled in England. It is approached by two flights of steps, which were mounted by many pilgrims on their knees.

Of the shrine nothing remains save the traces in the pavement, yet it is not difficult to realise its form and beauty from two representations which are extant; one in a thirteenth-century window on the north side of Trinity Chapel, and the other in a manuscript,[1] which was partially destroyed by fire in 1731. These, in addition to the description left by Erasmus[2] and others, leave little doubt as to its appearance.

The shrine of St. Thomas was similar in arrangement to those of St. Edward at Westminster, St. Cuthbert at Durham, and St. Alban's.

The lower part of the shrine was of stone with recesses all round, into which ailing pilgrims pressed the diseased limb, the nearest contact possible to the healing body of the saint. Above this was a wooden box-like structure or case suspended by a rope to a pulley in the roof by which it was drawn up or lowered. When raised it exposed to view the feretory containing the relics, to the accompaniment of the music of silver bells attached to the canopy, which the act of moving set ringing in the same way as at St. Cuthbert's shrine. Then was seen a magnificent sight. The feretory was covered with gold plates, and over it was a gold wire netting on which was fastened a wealth of jewels. Albert, archbishop of Livonia, said that

[1] Cottonian, Tib. E. viii. fol. 269. [2] *Peregrinatio Religionis ergo.*

he believed there was not in the whole world another shrine for value or beauty like that of St. Thomas of Canterbury.

The description left by a Venetian pilgrim about the year 1500 portrays the magnificence of this shrine.

"The tomb of St. Thomas the Martyr, Archbishop of Canterbury, exceeds all belief. Notwithstanding its great size it is all covered with plates of pure gold ; yet the gold is scarcely seen because it is covered with various precious stones, as sapphires, ballasses, diamonds, rubies, and emeralds ; and wherever the eye turns, something more beautiful than the rest is observed. Nor, in addition to these natural beauties, is the skill of art wanting ; for in the midst of the gold are the most beautiful sculptured gems, both small and large, as well as such as are in relief, as agates, onyxes, cornelians, and cameos ; and some cameos are of such a size that I am afraid to name it ; but everything is far surpassed by a ruby, not larger than a thumb nail, which is fixed at the right of the altar. The church is somewhat dark, and particularly in the spot where the shrine is placed ; and when we went to see it the sun was near setting, and the weather was cloudy : nevertheless, I saw that ruby as if I had it in my hand. They say it was given by a king of France."

The very disputes between the archbishops of Canterbury and York as to the right of one to bear his cross in the province of the other assisted in the enrichment of this shrine ; for in 1354 a compromise was made, by which the metropolitan of York might have his cross borne erect before him throughout the southern province on condition that he bought the privilege within two months of his consecration by sending a golden image of the value of forty pounds to the shrine of St. Thomas, which image was to represent an archbishop bearing a cross. Under this arrangement Archbishop Booth of York, in 1452, offered an image of himself in his pontificals at the already gorgeous shrine.

The oft-mentioned jewel given by the King of France and called a ruby by the Venetian pilgrim, is described by the Bohemian Ambassador, in 1446, as "a carbuncle that shines at night, half the size of a hen's egg"; but it was described as a diamond when it came into the possession of Queen Mary in 1554. This gem, the "Regale of France," was too well known to be confused with any other jewel, and it was probably owing to the prismatic colours given forth from this exceptional diamond in the gloom of the chapel that we have these discrepancies in name. When fastened to the new shrine the figure of an angel was made in gold, pointing to the stone to attract special attention.

The custodian with a white wand pointed out to the pilgrims the several jewels, naming the donors and mentioning the history or virtue of each.

On the top ridge of the feretory were three finials of silver gilt—evidently the cresting which cost £7 10*s*. in 1314—the centre one larger than the other two, and against them, in the Cottonian drawing, the weight of each is given, the centre one eighty ounces and the others sixty ounces each. Whether these finials were on the feretory or the canopy is doubtful. In the painted glass only two appear on the shrine, and it is probable that although on the feretory, the canopy was made with apertures through which the finials appeared when it was lowered; or it may be by a stretch of imagination that the delineator has exposed these features which were enclosed by the canopy shown in his drawing.

The feretory, as represented in the window (which glass is but a few years later than the erection of the shrine), may reasonably be taken as a faithful picture, though the stone substructure in the Cotton. MS. is evidently depicted aright (allowing for bad drawing), for the architecture in the glass is altogether fanciful.

Beneath the shrine in the MS. drawing is the chest containing the relics—the same chest in which they were deposited in 1220—and an inscription to the following effect :—

"This chest of iron con*tained the* bones of Thomas Beck*et, skull and* all, with the wounde *of his death* and the pece cut *out of his skull laid in the same wounde.*"[1]

In the State Papers is a letter of William Penison to Cromwell, describing the visit of the Lady of Montreuil to Canterbury on her way to France :—

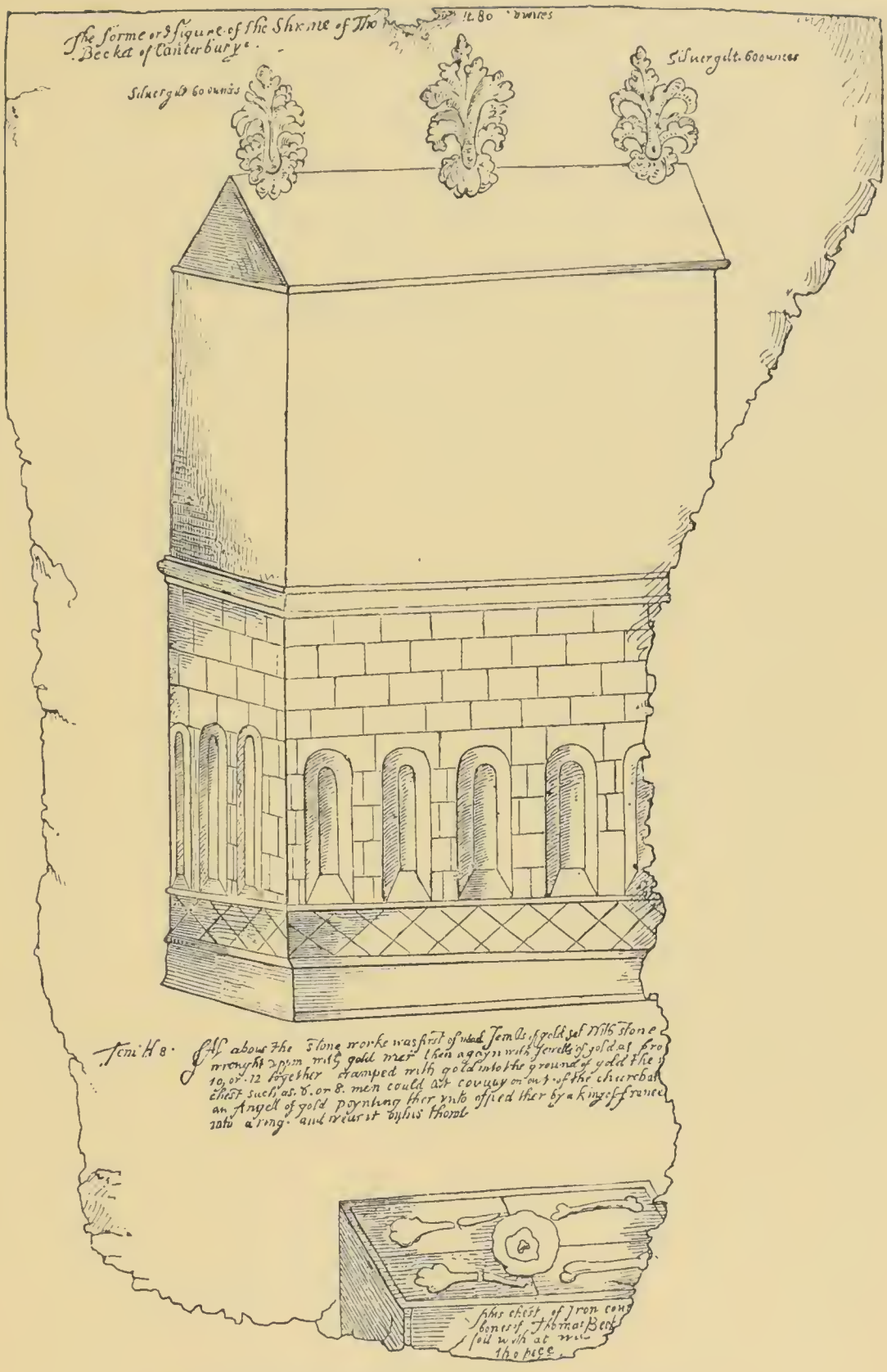
"By ten of the cloc, she, her gentilwomen, and said ambassadour whent to the church, where I showed her Saincte Thomas shryne, and all such other things worthy of sight ; at the which she was not litle marveilled of the greate riches therof, saing it to be innumerable, and that if she had not seen it, all the men in the wourlde could never a made her to belyve it. Thus overlooking and vewing more than an owre, as well the shryne as Saint Thomas hed, being at both sett cousshins to knyle, and the Pryour openyng Sainct Thomas hed, saying to her 3 tymes, 'This is Saint Thomas hed,' and offered her to kysse ; but she nother knyled, nor would kysse it, but still vewing the riches therof."

One other shrine to St. Thomas remains to be noticed, mentioned in the above quotation, the facts about which appear quite clear, although there has been much difference of opinion concerning the place of the skull and the derivation of the name "Becket's Crown."

In the treasury accounts for 1207—before the translation —are the amounts derived from the offerings made to the various objects associated with the passion of St. Thomas :—

From the Tomb of S. Thomas . . .	£320	0	0
From the Martyrdom of S. Thomas . .	27	5	6
From the Crown of S. Thomas . . .	41	10	0

[1] The letters and words in italics were destroyed when the MS. was burnt.


The forme or figure of the Shrine of Tho Becket of Canterbury
Silver gilt 600 unces
Silver gilt. 600 unces
Temi H 8.
This chest of Iron cons bones of Thomas Bec

THE SHRINE OF ST. THOMAS OF CANTERURY
Cottonian MS., Tib. E. viii. f. 269

The year after the translation the receipts show a great increase :—

1221	From the Crown, which have been spent on the shrine	£71 10 0
1222	From the Crown, which have been spent on the shrine	£90 10 0

and so on, contributing towards the completion of that shrine which was the work of that incomparable officer, Walter de Colchester, Sacrist of St. Albans, assisted by Elias de Dereham, Canon of Salisbury.[1]

There were four distinct places where the saint was venerated in the cathedral, each of which had its custos, or guardian, as is seen in a Book of Accounts for 1451 preserved in the Chapter Library, where the receipts from each of the guardians went into the treasury :—

From the Guardian of the Crown of S. Thomas .	40*s.*
From the Guardian of the Shrine of S. Thomas .	30*s.*
From the Guardian of the Crown of S. Thomas .	20*s.*
From the Guardian of the Tomb of Blessed Thomas	3 – 4
From the Guardian of the Martyrdom of S. Thomas	3 – 4.

Here we have the Martyrdom, the Tomb in the crypt, the Shrine, and the Crown.

In the will of the Black Prince, 1376, he bequeaths hangings "for the altar where my lord S. Thomas lies, for the altar where the head is, and for the altar where the point of the sword is," which were of black, embroidered with white ostrich feathers, and red borders ornamented with swans having ladies' heads. Similar bequests are made to the same places in many other royal wills, but they do not decide where the head or the crown were, or whether they were one or two distinct objects.

Some learned writers contend that the easternmost portion of the new work of the cathedral was called "The

[1] Matt. Paris.

Crown of St. Thomas," or "Becket's Crown," because it was the crowning point of the building; others say it derived its name of Corona because it was circular and the ribs of the vault suggested a crown; but they appear to ignore the writings of contemporary authorities.

From Erasmus we learn that in the crypt was exhibited the perforated skull of the martyr, *the forehead is left bare to be kissed, whilst the other parts are covered with silver.* This was one head reliquary; but in the account of the visit of the Lady of Montreuil the prior, *opening S. Thomas Head*, offered it for her to kiss, so that it was evidently a different reliquary from that of the skull in the crypt where the forehead was left bare—it was "Becket's Crown."

Erasmus also went into the chapel at the extreme east end, where he was shown the *whole face,* "tota facies," of St. Thomas, gilt, and adorned with many jewels, and speaking of the officer who had shown it to him, calls him "the attendant on the holy head." This should be a sufficient answer to Professor Willis, who thought it meant a *full-length image* of St. Thomas which he *supposed* stood in the Corona, a term, he says, that refers only to the architecture.

The first known notice of the "Head of St. Thomas" is a memorandum in the Royal Wardrobe Accounts for April 18th, 1303, of the royal offerings made:—

At the Shrine of S. Thomas the Martyr, one brooch of gold.	
At the same shrine in money	7*s.*
At the Head of the same saint	7*s.*
At the Point of the Sword whereby the same saint underwent his martyrdom	7*s.*
At the Cloak of the same saint	7*s.*
At the Tomb of the same saint in the vault . .	7*s.*

There is an entry in the Registers of Prior Henry de Eastry in 1314: "For ornamenting the crown of St. Thomas with gold, silver, and precious stones, £115 12 0."

This again is decisive; the head reliquaries were largely used at this time, and the Church has always regarded with special reverence that part in which a martyr suffered, which would account for the lavish use of most precious things in adorning the shrine of that part—things which would scarcely be used in the decoration of the walls of a chapel.

The chapel, unless it contained something very precious, would not have a special guardian, and if that treasure was no more than a golden image, the pilgrims would reserve their offerings for something more sacred. Besides, consider the opportunity given the monks to build up to St. Thomas after their choir had been destroyed, and their scheme will unfold itself. Men of those days seized upon opportunities which offered, whether for the glory of God, the honour of His saints, or for the enriching of their own treasury. Before they began to rebuild they had the body of the most popular saint in Europe; they had a separate relic shorn from his crown—as the tonsured part is called—and they built for *it;* they already had the spot where he fell and his first tomb; they added the shrine and the crown.

PILGRIM'S SIGN: HEAD OF ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY

The head reliquary of the crown was so richly adorned that it came to be known as the Golden Head. In the chapel of "Becket's Crown" are no traces of an altar, but in the raised pavement at the extreme east end are indications that there were formerly some railings so arranged as to protect some object of veneration.

The Cottonian drawing and inscription is the only obstacle to contend against, yet even this is not difficult

to unravel. Nothing is more likely than that in the sixteenth century the Church would be robbed of the smaller reliquaries before the demolition of the great shrines: the crown might possibly be transferred to the chest of relics together with the skull from the crypt for greater safety, for no one could possibly have anticipated such action as was taken. Here, again, the wording in the Cotton. MS. must not be taken too literally, as the skull could not be perfect seeing that Roger, the warden of St. Mary's altar, was offered the abbacy of St. Augustine's Monastery if he could procure a relic of St. Thomas for that house. Roger went to St. Augustine's and took with him "a piece of his (St. Thomas') skull which was cut off." Another fragment of his skull went to Rome, and other churches possessed small relics of St. Thomas. Implicit credence cannot be placed in this drawing, as it is not clearly indicated whether it represents the actual relics, or, as Stanley suggests, only a painting on the flat lid of the chest, representing the fatal wound. In the *Declaration of Faith* it will be seen that the skull which was burnt was independent of the chest of relics. A contributor to the *Archæologia* concludes that the drawing is not reliable, as he is convinced it was not made until a considerable time after the destruction, and then drawn only from the description in the pages of Stow.

During the month of September the Royal Commission for the destruction of shrines, under Dr. John Layton and a strong military guard, arrived at Canterbury to carry out the work of sacrilege. The spoil of jewels and gold of the shrine were carried off in two coffers on the shoulders of eight men, while twenty-six carts were employed to remove the accumulated offerings to God and St. Thomas, and the noted Regale of France was mounted in Henry's thumb ring. The crypt containing the saint's first tomb was made into a wine cellar.

A Royal Proclamation followed on November 16th stating that :—

"Forasmuch as it now clearly appeared that Thomas Becket had been killed in a riot excited by his own obstinacy and intemperate language, and had been afterwards canonised by the Bishop of Rome as the champion of his usurped authority, the King's Majesty thought it expedient to declare to his loving subjects that he was no saint, but rather a rebel and traitor to his prince. Therefore his Grace straitly chargeth and commandeth that henceforth the said Thomas Becket shall not be esteemed, named, reputed nor called a saint, but 'Bishop Becket,' and that his images and pictures throughout the whole realm shall be put down and avoided out of all churches and chapels, and other places ; and that from henceforth the days used to be festivals in his name shall not be observed, nor any service, office, antiphones, collects, and prayers in his name read, but erased and put out of all books."

In consequence of the severe penalties attached to this decree, it was so rigorously carried out that a calendar containing the name of St. Thomas unerased is a great rarity.

The cult of St. Thomas had, however, such extraordinary vitality that, notwithstanding the royal decrees, it was largely continued. Even to our own day the use of the term "Translation Sessions" for the June Quarter Sessions, as a legal phrase, is a survival of the commemoration of the Feast of the Translation of St. Thomas on July 7th, 1220.

In the Bull *Cum Redemptor* issued by Pope Paul III., December 17th, 1538, against Henry VIII., the violation of the shrine is specially noticed :—

"After he (Henry VIII.) had, for the greater contempt of religion, summoned St. Thomas, the Archbishop of Canterbury, into court, and caused him to be condemned as contumacious, and to be declared a traitor, he has ordered his bones,

which in the realm of England, for the numberless miracles there wrought by Almighty God, were kept in a golden shrine at Canterbury, to be disinterred and burnt, and the ashes to be scattered to the winds: thus far surpassing the cruelty of all nations; for even in war, conquerors do not rage against the bodies of the dead. And in addition to this, he has usurped possession of all the offerings given by the liberality of different kings, some of them of England, and of other princes, which were attached to the shrine, and were of immense value."

CANTERBURY BELL

PILGRIMS' SIGNS

HEAD OF ST. THOMAS

Doubt has been thrown upon the proceedings of the king's commissioners, and the burning of the bones denied. Against the statements of Stow, Sanders, and Pallini, and of the Bull, are the assertions of Harpsfield and of William Thomas, Clerk of the Privy Council in the reign of Edward VI. The former says, "We have of late unshrined him, and buried his holy relics," and the latter, "his bones are spread amongst the bones of so many dead men, that without some greate miracle they wyll not be found agayne." In the Declaration of Faith issued by royal authority in 1539 it says: "If this hede was brent, was therefore S. Thomas brent," which is almost an acknowledgment that the skull of the saint was destroyed by fire, and is an apologia with an evident attempt to mystify what had actually occurred, and to justify the sacrilege.

The extreme popularity of St. Thomas throughout England is apparent by the numerous representations of him as archbishop and of his martyrdom, which have

survived the sweeping decrees and indefatigable search for their destruction. Not least among these survivals are the reliquaries upon which his martyrdom is portrayed. Whether they contained relics of St. Thomas or shrines for the relics of other martyrs decorated with the scene of St. Thomas' passion is not positively determined. Such a noteworthy example as St. Thomas might fittingly be commemorated on the châsse of another saint whose acts had not received such world-wide distinction; but the former theory is now generally accepted. One of these caskets is preserved in the cathedral at Hereford. For long it was associated with the name of St. Ethelbert, who gave his name to the dedication of the mother church of that see; nothing, however, exists to show evidence that it had any relation to that saint, while the decoration of the exterior unquestionably represents the murder and entombment of St. Thomas of Canterbury.

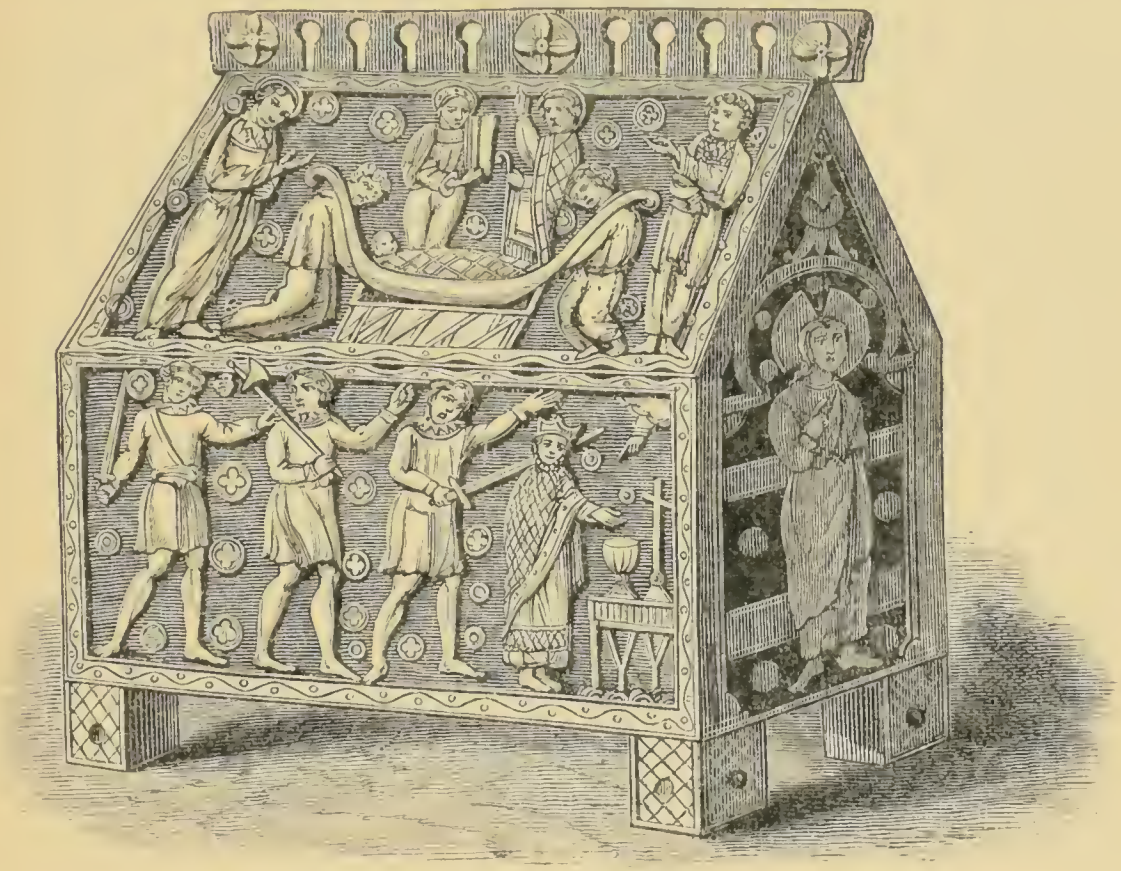
The reliquary, $8\frac{1}{4}$ inches in height, is 7 inches long and $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches broad. It is made of oak, with a high-pitched roof, and the back opens on hinges. This casket is covered with plates of copper, gilded and enamelled in the style of the thirteenth-century Limoges work. On the front of the shrine is the martyrdom. Before an altar, on which are a cross, chalice, and paten, stands St. Thomas in mass vestments with a low mitre without infulæ. Above the altar the hand of the Eternal Father issues from a cloud in benediction, and behind the archbishop are the three barons armed with swords and battle-axe, the foremost has brought his sword down upon the neck of the saint. The heads of these figures stand in relief.

On this side of the roof is the entombment, where the body, swathed in a diapered winding-sheet, is being placed in a high tomb. The officiating prelate, his attendant, and the two thurifers are all nimbed.

The back of the shrine is decorated with quatrefoils, and the two gable ends are occupied with a male and female saint respectively.

The borders are of gold and enamels, the latter being of blue, light blue, green, yellow, red, chocolate, and white.

The cresting of the shrine is of copper, pierced with eight keyhole-shaped openings. The wood of the interior



RELIQUARY OF ST. THOMAS AT HEREFORD

is stained with what is conjectured to be blood, and on the side is a cross *pattée fitchée* painted in red, which is supposed to be a distinctive mark that the relics enshrined were those of a martyr.

ST. EDMUND OF CANTERBURY

It is by a curious evolution of circumstances that a shrine of an English archbishop yet remains, glorious

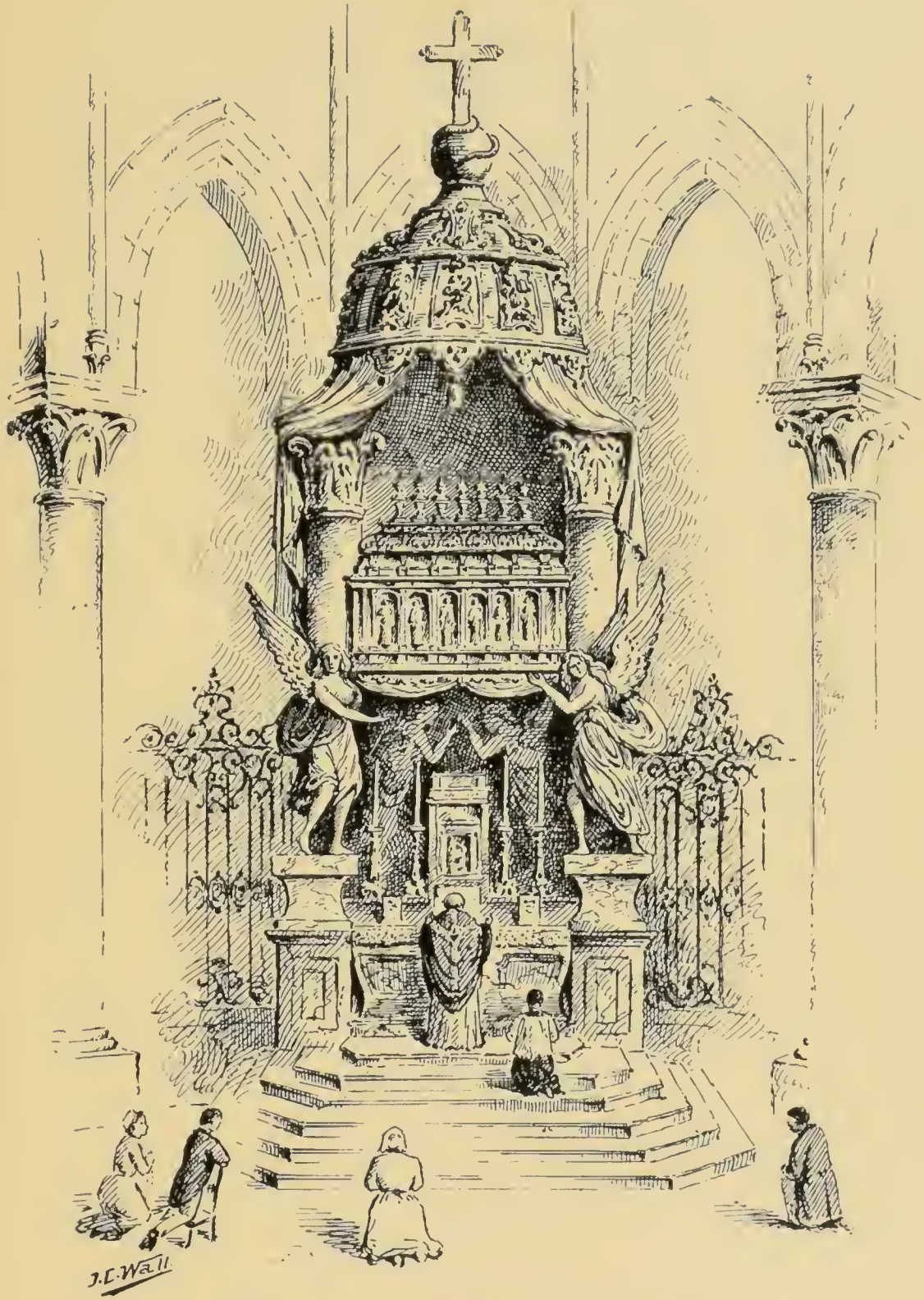
from its sacred contents, beautified in its workmanship, and exalted to a place of the highest honour; but it is only through those circumstances, which caused the exile of the archbishop, that it is so, for if England had been the proud possessor of the relics of St. Edmund up to the sixteenth century, at that period they would have been desecrated.

It is curious, again, that the archbishop should have been canonised by the pope, seeing that his exile was mainly due to his anti-papal protests when he thought that power detrimental to the national welfare.

St. Edmund of Canterbury was fighting for the free election of bishops against the oppressive action of the king in thrusting his own nominees into vacant sees, and against the excessive tribute demanded by the pope. The king, however, had obtained the countenance of the pope by bribery, and when Gregory IX. sent his warrants to England, demanding the provision for three hundred Italians in the first benefices which should fall vacant, and suspending the bishops from giving benefices to any English priest until they were provided for, the king would not support St. Edmund against this iniquitous demand. The archbishop left the country and took up his abode in the Cistercian monastery at Pontigny, the same place in which his predecessor St. Thomas had dwelt in his exile.

Anguish at his own inability to rescue the Church of England from its perilous state was the cause of his death, which occurred at Soissy, November 16th, 1240. His heart was buried in that place, but his body, pontifically vested, was carried on a wooden conveyance to Pontigny.

The miracles attributed to St. Edmund were so numerous that, six years after his death, Pope Innocent IV. canonised him, "for he feared lest the said saint should punish him



SHRINE OF ST. EDMUND AT PONTIGNY

for neglecting to his canonisation, which he had put off day after day, owing to the whispers of slanderers."[1]

The following year the relics of St. Edmund were translated with extraordinary pomp to a shrine above the high altar, and the account of the function by the saint's friend and companion, St. Richard of Chichester, as one who assisted, is here given. It is contained in a letter to his "venerable friend Lord Robert, abbot of Bayham."

"That you may be better informed of the elevation and present state of the body of St. Edmund, be it known unto you that on the morrow of the Holy Trinity last past, when the tomb of our holy father Edmund was first opened in the evening before a few persons only who were present, we found the body fragrant with a very sweet odour, and in a full and perfect condition. The head was still covered with hair, and the face shining, and the body with the other members sound in all its parts, and odoriferous beyond balm or incense. The nose, however, had suffered injury by pressure from the upper stone, but was not decayed; and deservedly so, for whoever examines into his life more fully, will see that it is a sin to have doubts of his virginity. The whole body, and especially the face, was found as it were steeped in oil; which we believe signified the grace as well of his morals as of his doctrine, for there was grace diffused over his lips, in reading, disputing, and preaching; God had anointed him with the oil of gladness above all the readers, teachers, and disputants of his time; wherefore there was grace diffused over his lips. We shall find in the same some other marks also of virtues, which we will relate to you in secret when the opportunity of a favourable time shall arise, too long to allow of my now setting them down in writing. But as touching those which have been mentioned, your discretion may not entertain a doubt, for we speak and write what we know, and testify what we have seen. With our own hands we handled his holy body, and with diligence and reverence combed and arranged his head, with the hairs strong and unharmed. But on the Sunday next before the

[1] Matt. Paris.

feast of St. Barnabas, in presence of our lord the king of France, with his mother and the counts his brothers, and many nobles besides, moreover two cardinals, to wit, the bishop of Albano, and the legate of France, with the archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, and other venerable prelates, and many others aiding, whose number we could not learn, at Pontigny, by the divine will, with unspeakable exultation and glory, and with magnificent thanksgivings to God, was celebrated the translation of our most blessed father St. Edmund, archbishop of Canterbury and confessor, to the no small augmentation of the honour of our nation."

King Louis of France ordained that greater facilities should be given to the English to visit the shrine than to those of any other nation, and it was determined that the shrine should be honoured by offerings of lighted tapers and with elaborately worked images.

When these things became known to Earl Richard in England, he expressed regret that his brother the King of England and himself had not been present at so glorious and solemn a translation, "for he was our saint by birth, education, and promotion, although owing to our sins he withdrew from England," and he undertook to defray the cost of a fourth part, or the front, of the shrine.

The abbey was devastated, the church burnt, and the tombs broken open by the Huguenots in 1567 ; then there were the destructive acts of the Revolution, but the relics of St. Edmund were preserved through these vicissitudes and again enshrined. High above the altar, upheld by the hands of angels, is the golden coffer containing the body of our archbishop. A staircase at the back leads the pilgrim to a level with the shrine, which on that side is of glass, through which the relics are seen. The shrine, with the altar and canopy, dates from the beginning of the eighteenth century, and is of good workmanship of that period.

ST. CUTHBERT

"When God shall have taken to himself my soul, bury me in the front of this my oratory, close under the eastern side of the cross which I have there erected. You will find on the north side of my dwelling a stone coffin, hid in the ground, the gift of Cudda, the venerable Abbot. In this place my body, wrapping it in the linen cloth which you will there find, a cloth which I was unwilling to wear in my lifetime, but, out of affection to its donor, Verca the Abbess [abbess of Tiningham], favoured of God, I have kept it for my winding sheet."[1]

This was the charge given to Herefrid, abbot of Lindisfarne, when visiting St. Cuthbert, who had retired to his cell on Farne Island.

The monks of Lindisfarne longed to have the body of their late bishop to rest among them, and at last prevailed on the saint to give his permission, although he told them how for their sakes it were better he should be buried at Farne, for as he was notoriously a servant of Christ, culprits of every kind would flock to his tomb for sanctuary, and give them much trouble by compelling them to intercede in their behalf with the potentates of the land. His consent was given on condition that his body should be buried *within* the church, in order that they themselves might have the opportunity of visiting his grave at their pleasure, and yet have the power of excluding strangers whenever it seemed good. By this St. Cuthbert evidently anticipated great renown, and his prophetic vision saw the streams of pilgrims who for centuries directed their footsteps to his tomb.

A few hours before his death St. Cuthbert admonished Herefrid in this wise: "Know and remember that if necessity shall ever compel you out of two misfortunes to choose one, I had much rather that you would dig

[1] Bede, *V.S.C.*, xxxvii.

up my bones from the grave, and taking them with you, sojourn where God shall provide, than that you should on any account consent to the iniquity of Schismatics and put your necks under their yoke." This wish, we shall see, was literally obeyed, not in consequence of schism, but of peril through the incursions of pagans.

St. Cuthbert died March 20th, 687, and we are told by an anonymous monk of Lindisfarne[1] how the brethren, after washing the body, robed it in the sacred vestures, and placed the sacramental elements on his breast. The body was conveyed to Lindisfarne and buried with all honour in a stone coffin on the right side of the altar.

When St. Cuthbert had been buried eleven years the brethren wished to take up his bones, expecting, as is usual, to find the flesh reduced to dust, and to place them in a feretory above ground for due veneration. They obtained the sanction of Bishop Eadbert, who ordered that it should be done on the anniversary of his burial.

When the coffin was opened they were astonished to find the body whole, as if it had been alive, the joints were flexible like one asleep, while all the vestures were not only sound, but wonderful for their freshness and gloss.

The amazed monks hastened to tell the bishop what they had found, taking along with them the chasuble in which the body had been buried. Acting under the directions of the prelate, they put a new garment on the body of St. Cuthbert and placed it in a new coffin above the pavement of the sanctuary.

Then came the incursions of the Danes, the first of a long list of troubles to the church, which compelled them to follow the advice of St. Cuthbert and start on their historical travels with their precious burden.

The ravages of these pirates reached Lindisfarne on the

[1] *Boll. Mon.*, lib. iv. § 13.

7th of June, 793. The church was robbed of its vessels and many of the monks martyred. When it was possible Bishop Higbald and the surviving ecclesiastics returned to their church, when to their joy they found that although stripped of all other valuables the body of St. Cuthbert was left undisturbed.[1]

After continuous alarms the monks were obliged to flee for safety from the island in 875.

Into the saint's coffin were placed other relics of various saints—the head of St. Oswald, some bones of St. Aidan and of the bishops Eata, Eadfrid, and Ethelwold, and they set out they knew not whither, followed by the lay inhabitants of the island.

They first fled to the Northumbrian hills, and then, as Symeon states, they moved from place to place like sheep fleeing from wolves. Wherever they went the people received them with veneration and supplied their wants, and many miracles occurred at the various stopping-places. Those who wish can trace their route by consulting the writings of Prior Wessington and Canon Raine.

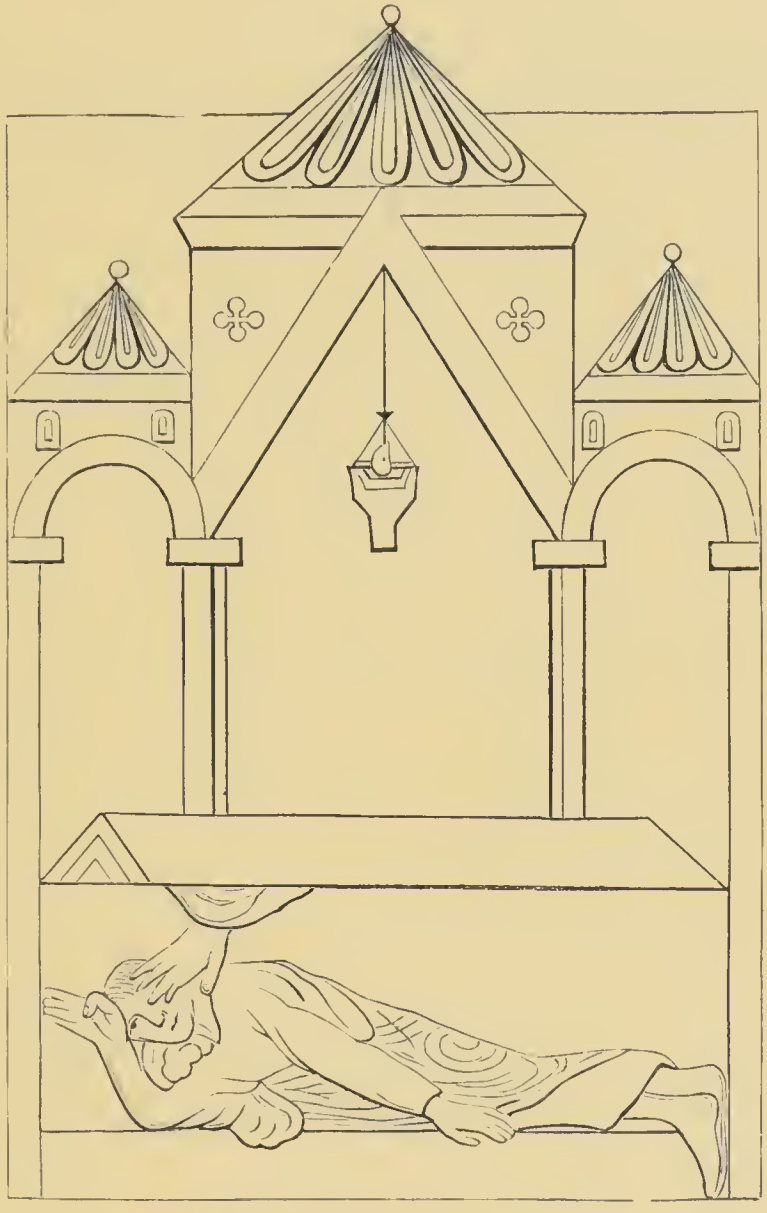
They wandered about until, despairing of a peaceful abode in England, they prepared to cross to Ireland. The idea emanated from the Bishop Eardulf, who communicated his intention to the elder monks, but kept the project from the junior monks and the laymen.

A ship was appointed to meet them at the mouth of the Derwent in Cumberland, the body of St. Cuthbert was carried on board, and the senior monks followed. As the wind filled the sails they shouted their farewells to the others on the beach, who then, to their amazement and grief, realised the deception. Then arose a wail of woe. "Thou," they cried, "thou our patron and our father, lo thou art carried like a prisoner into exile; we, equally

[1] Symeon.

wretched and captive, are exposed to our raging adversaries like sheep to the teeth of wolves."

The vessel had made but little way when a storm broke over them, the wind drove them back; St. Cuthbert would



SHRINE OF ST. CUTHBERT

not leave those so devoted to him in loneliness far from their homes. Before those on board could land, the book of the Gospels, which was carried on the coffin, fell into the sea and disappeared. As soon as they found themselves again on land the bishop and his companions fell

prostrate and acknowledged the justice which had thwarted their scheme. The grief of those who were to be left behind was turned to joy, and they cheerfully began to search along the coast in the hope that the lost book might have been washed ashore. It was at last found so far away as Whitherne, in Galloway.

This book is now preserved in the Cottonian MSS., British Museum, and its appearance confirms the account of having been immersed in water, though it is by no means as the legend says, "much more beautiful than before."

The lay folk had lost confidence in their bishop through the late proceedings, and many deserted the company to find for themselves homes, leaving an insufficient number to draw the car containing the coffin; but a horse and bridle were miraculously found, and readily appropriated to the saint's service.

They now journeyed to Chester-le-Street, which was reached in the spring of 883; there the king built and endowed a cathedral of wood for them, and Eardulph, the sixteenth and last bishop of Lindisfarne, became the first bishop of Chester-le-Street.

The fame of St. Cuthbert spread, and large domains were given to him.

King Athelstan visited the shrine and offered numerous gifts of plate, vestures, and land; some of which we shall hereafter see are still preserved at Durham. Many other kings and prelates did the same, and St. Cuthbert's devotees accumulated great wealth.

The Danes again disturbed the saint's repose, and the bishop, with his clergy, taking St. Cuthbert and the treasures, hastened to Ripon in the early part of the year 995.

The danger passed, and they started to return to the church *which they had formerly inhabited* (probably Lindisfarne). They reached a place called Wrdelan (Wardley?)

—when the vehicle containing the body became stationary, no effort could move it. For three days the clergy fasted and prayed, then the saint acquainted them that he wished to rest at Durham.

Upon the top of a hill a small church of boughs was built to contain the coffin, to be immediately succeeded by a better edifice of wood until a church of stone could be erected. In three years this was built, and the body of St. Cuthbert was reverently deposited therein September 4th, 999.

"In times of old," says Reginald, "there flourished one Elfred Westoue, who, for the love he bore to S. Cuthbert, was distinguished by peculiar privileges conceded to no one but himself—for, as often as it pleased him, he might freely and with impunity open the coffin of the saint, might wrap him in such robes as he thought fit, and he could obtain from him whatever he requested. It was his custom to cut the overgrowing hair of his venerable head, dividing and smoothing it with an ivory comb, and to cut the nails of his fingers with a pair of silver scissors which he had made."

With the coming of William of Normandy the monks in fear again started on their peregrinations. They went to Lindisfarne, but returned to Durham during the Lent of 1070.

In 1093 the old cathedral was demolished to give place to the present building, but before the old church was taken down the bishop, William Carilpho,

"did prepare a faire and beautifull tombe of stone in the Cloyster garth, a yard high from the ground, where S. Cuthbert was laid untill his shrine was prepared for him in the new church that now is. Over which tombe was layd a faire and comely marble. But when his body was translated to the Feriture where it was inshrined, in honour of him they made a goodly large and curious image of marble representinge S. Cuthbert, in that forme in which he was wont to say masse, with his miter on his head and his crosier staff in his hand, and his other

vestments very curiously engraven on the said marble, which, after his body was inshrined in the new church, was placed above the said tombe."[1]

In this cloister tomb the relics of St. Cuthbert rested until the year 1104, when they were translated into the present cathedral. Of this translation there are two accounts—one in the *Acta Sanctorum*, which is anonymous, and the other by the monk Reginald (about 1180).

These accounts may perhaps seem somewhat tedious, but the sequel will show the value of them. The first is from the *Acta Sanctorum* :—

"Under the head of miracles, all do not entertain one and the same opinion, either with respect to the presence of the sacred body of S. Cuthbert, or its state of incorruption. Some, founding their opinion on various conjectures, dream that before this our time his body has been removed to some other place, but that his grave, although it can no longer boast of its occupant, is not deprived of the glory of his virtues; but, in proof of its old possessor, gives frequent miraculous manifestations even at the present time. Others admit that the sacred remains are still here, but that the frame of a human body should remain undissolved during the revolutions of so many ages is more than the laws of nature allow of; and that notwithstanding the Divine Power may command all created things to undergo its pleasure, yet that in the case of this body, and its state of incorruption, they have before them the testimony of no one who had explored it either with his hand or eye, and that therefore it was a difficult matter to believe with respect to this man, however much a saint—a thing not in his case proved, and which they were well aware had been conceded to a very few only of holy men. In this manner the one party conjecturing that the holy body had been carried away elsewhere, and the other not allowing its incorruption, the brethren who affirmed that it was there, and in a perfect state, were disbelieved, and they became in consequence anxious for their reputation. On this account they betook themselves to God in prayer, and

[1] *MS. Cosin.*

entreated that He, who is wonderful in his saints, would prove Himself wonderful in the manifestation of so great virtue, and would, to the glory of His name, exclude all doubt by indubitable signs.

"In the meanwhile, the church which had been founded by William, the late Bishop of Durham, was almost finished, and the time was at hand for transferring into it the venerable body of Father Cuthbert, to occupy the place prepared for it by the ingenious hands of workmen, and receive the meed of worthy veneration.

"The 29th of August, 1104, the day appointed for the solemn removal being at hand, the brethren entered into a resolution, that as no one was alive who could give them accurate information, they themselves, as far as they should be allowed by the permission of God, should examine into the manner in which each individual thing was placed and arranged about the holy body, for this purpose, that they might make it ready for removal on the day approaching, and without loss of time furnish it with things fit and becoming, lest when the hour of festive procession had arrived, any difficulty, proceeding from want of foresight, should cause delay, and from that delay any unpleasant feeling should arise in the minds of the numerous assemblage which had come together to witness such a solemnity.

"The brethren, therefore, appointed for the purpose, nine in number, with Turgot their Prior, having qualified themselves for the task by fasting and prayer, on the 24th of August, as soon as it was dark, prostrated themselves before the venerable coffin, and amid tears and prayers they tried to open it with fearful and trembling hands. Aided by instruments of iron, they soon succeeded in their attempt, when, to their astonishment, they found a chest covered on all sides with hides, carefully fixed to it by iron nails. From the weight and size of this chest, and other facts which presented themselves, they were induced to believe that there was another coffin within it, but fear for a long time prevented them from making the experiment. At last, the Prior having twice or thrice commanded them to proceed, they renewed their task, and having succeeded in opening the iron bands, they lifted the lid.

"Here they saw within a coffin of wood which had been covered all over by coarse linen cloth of a threefold texture, of the length of a man, and covered with a lid of the same description. Again they hesitated, for a doubt arose whether this was the dwelling place of the holy body, or that there was still another coffin within. In this stage of their operations they called to mind the words of Bede, which record that the body of S. Cuthbert had been found by the brethren of Lindisfarne in a state of incorruption eleven years after its burial, and had been placed above ground for the purpose of worthy veneration. With this information before them, they discovered that *this was the very same coffin* which had for so many years preserved the deposit of so heavenly a treasure. Under this conviction they fell upon their knees, and prayed S. Cuthbert to intercede with the Almighty for pardon for their presumption. They rejoiced, and at the same time they were afraid. Their fear resulted from an apprehension of the consequences of their boldness, and yet the certainty that they had before them so great a treasure inspiring them with delight, their joy burst forth into tears, and with thankful hearts they conceived that their desires had been amply satisfied. To make a further examination appeared to be a rashness which would unquestionably bring down upon them the Divine vengeance; and therefore, laying aside their intention of more minutely investigating the sacred body, they entered into deliberation as to the manner in which it should be removed on the day of translation which was approaching.

"But amongst the brethren who were present, there was one, a man of great constancy in Christ, who, by the effect of grace, had become that in fact which his name implied. His name was Leofwin, which means in English, *a dear friend.* He was dear to God, and God was a friend to him. God proved Himself to be his Father by the chastisements which He compelled him to undergo, and he evinced himself to be a son of God by patiently and thankfully submitting to the rod which corrected him. All who knew his life and conversation had no doubt that his breast was the temple of the Holy Spirit. He, when he saw the brethren afraid of opening the coffin which they had discovered, and viewing the proof of celestial grace and matter of new exaltation which it might contain, stepped forward into the

midst of them, and speaking in a more fervent spirit than was his custom, exclaimed, 'What do ye, my brethren? what do ye fear? That deed will never fail of being attended by a happy result, which begins from the inspiration of God. He who gave us the will to make the investigation, gives us the hope of discovering what we seek. The progress which we have already made without difficulty, is a proof of the good which we may hope to arise from what remains to be done. Our beginning would never have been so successful if it had been the Divine will that we should not persevere to the end. Our object in investigating these sacred relics proceeds from no contempt or diffidence of his holiness, but that the Lord of virtues, the King himself of glory, may be the more glorified by all men in proportion to the mightiness of the miracle manifested in the present day. Let us then examine the inner parts of the hospitable chest that upon a matter which we have seen with our eyes, and have thoroughly examined, which our hands have handled, our testimony may be credited, and no argument may be left to the doubtful for disbelieving our assertions.' The devout brethren regained their confidence by this admonition, and moved the venerable body from behind the altar where it had hitherto reposed, into the middle of the choir—a place more spacious and better adapted to the investigation.

"Their first step was to remove the linen cloth which enveloped the coffin, yet still they feared to open the coffin itself; and under a hope that its contents might be ascertained through a chink, or by other means, they carefully examined its exterior by candle-light, but without success. They then, but not without fear, removed the lid, and no sooner had they done this than they found another lid, placed somewhat lower, resting upon three transverse bars, and occupying the whole breadth and length of the coffin so as to completely conceal the contents beneath. Upon the upper part of it, near the head, there lay a book of the Gospels. This second lid was raisable by means of two iron rings, one at the head, and the other at the feet. A doubt no longer remained. They knew that the object of their search was before them, but still they hesitated to handle it.

"Whilst they were in this state of doubt, being encouraged by

the command of the Prior, and the exhortation of the brother above mentioned, at last they raised the lid, and having removed the linen cloth which had covered the sacred relics, they smelt an odour of the sweetest fragrancy; and behold, they found the venerable body of the blessed Father, the fruit of their anxious desire, laying on its right side in a perfect state, and, from the flexibility of its joints, representing a person asleep rather than dead. The moment they saw this, a tremendous fear thrilled through their limbs, and they shrunk back to a distance, not daring to look at the miracle before their eyes. Oft and many a time they fell upon their knees, beating their breasts, and exclaiming, with eyes and hands raised to heaven, 'Lord have mercy upon us.' Whilst they were in this state, each related to the one who was nearest to him what he had seen, just as if he had been the only one favoured with the sight. After a short interval, they all fell flat on the ground, and amid a deluge of tears, repeated the seven penitential psalms, and prayed the Lord not to correct them in his anger nor chasten them in his displeasure. When this was done, approaching the coffin on their hands and knees rather than on their feet they found in it such a mass of holy relics, that the moderate size of the coffin could never have contained them had not the holy body of the Father, by reclining upon its right side, allowed them on this side and on that a larger portion of space for reposing along with him. These relics, as is gathered from old books, consisted of the head of the glorious King and Martyr Oswald, the bones of the venerable Confessors Aidan, Eadbert, Eadfrid, and Ethelwold. There were, besides, the bones of the venerable Bede; these had obtained a resting place by his side, and along with the rest were contained in a small linen sack. It has been already stated who removed them (the bones of Bede) hither from Jarrow, the place where they were buried.[1] In fact, he who transferred to the Church of Durham the bones of St. Boysil, the same by revelation transferred to the same place those of the Dr. Bede, and placed them in different parts of the Church. Moreover, they found in the same place very many relics of other Saints. Their first wish was to remove the holy body

[1] See p. 110.

from its lateral position and place it on its back ; but they were unable to effect this on account of the multitude of relics which surrounded it. They determined, consequently, to remove it altogether for a while, that they might collect and place the relics by themselves and then restore it to its own proper abode. But still they dreaded to touch it with their hands, until being encouraged by the brother above mentioned, they at length became ready to execute the commands of their seniors.

"The two deputed to remove the venerable body from the coffin took their stand, the one at its head and the other at its feet ; and whilst they were raising it, holding it by those parts, it began to bend in the middle like a living man and sink downwards from its natural weight of solid flesh and bones. Upon this a third monk ran up, and supporting its middle in his arms they reverently placed it upon the pavement. In the meantime the relics of the saints having been removed they restored the body of the Father to its coffin. The hour of midnight devotion was at hand and prevented them from lingering any longer over it at present. They therefore chanted the *Te Deum* in a low voice, and afterwards singing Psalms of exultation, carried the body back again to the place from which they had removed it.

"The following night the same brethren again brought forth the body into the middle of the choir. The outer covering was a robe of a costly kind, next below this it was wrapped in a purple Dalmatic, and then in linen, and all these swathements retained their original freshness without any stain of corruption. The chasuble which he had worn for eleven years in his grave had been removed by the brethren of that period, and is now preserved elsewhere in the church as a proof of incorruption. When, therefore, by examining it with their eyes, by handling it with their hands, by raising it and lowering it, they had clearly discovered that it was a body in a state of incorruption, with solid nerves, and had ascertained that it had been tended with solemn care, in addition to the robes which it already wore, they clothed it with the most costly pall which they could find in the church, and over this they placed a covering of the finest linen. Having wrapped it in these, they restored it to its peaceful abode with the fervent devotion of prayers and tears. The other things which they had found along with him, they also replaced in his

coffin, namely, an ivory comb and a pair of scissors, still retaining their freshness, and as became a priest, a silver altar, a linen cloth for covering the sacramental elements, a paten, a chalice, small in size, but from its materials and workmanship, precious, its lower part representing a lion of the purest gold, which bore on its back an onyx stone, made hollow by the most beautiful workmanship, and by the ingenuity of the artist, so attached to the back of the lion, that it might be easily turned round with the hand, although it might not be separated from it. Moreover, of all the relics which had been found there, the only one which they restored to its place, by the side of the glorious bishop, was the head of the blessed King Oswald. The other relics, as has been already said, which had been removed from thence and decently arranged, are preserved in a frequented part of the church. [The minor relics were placed in reliquaries of ivory and of crystal, and arranged round the saints' chapel; but those of S. Bede had a separate shrine in the Gallice.] As soon as the body of the blessed Father was shut up in the coffin, they covered the coffin itself with linen cloth of a coarse texture, dipped in wax, and restored it to the place behind the altar where it had formerly rested."

The historian recounts the unbelief of some of those who had assembled for the translation, how the body was again exposed for their benefit and how they were convinced, the carrying of the relics into the new church, and concludes his narrative with an account of the miraculous cure of Richard, Abbot of St. Albans.

Reginald also gives an account of this investigation which agrees with the previous record; but he also tells us how the decomposition of the other relics was decaying the bottom of the coffin, so they placed another plank standing upon four short feet above it that the body of the saint should repose on a seemly couch. He tells us how this inner coffin is made entirely of black oak, and the whole of it is externally carved with very admirable engraving, the compartments are very circumscribed and

small, and they are occupied by divers beasts, flowers, and images, which seem to be inserted, engraved, or furrowed out in the wood. This coffin is enclosed in another outer one, which is entirely covered by hides, and is surrounded and firmly bound by iron nails and bandages. The third coffin, which is the outermost of all, is decorated with gold and precious stones, which, by means of indented flutings projecting from the second coffin, for which, in due order, similar projections are fabricated in this, is closely attached and fastened to it by long iron nails. This coffin cannot possibly be separated from the rest, because those nails can by no device be drawn out without fracture.

The body was enveloped in the winding sheet given him by the Abbess Verca, then came an amice, alb, and purple face cloth. Upon the forehead was a fillet of gold. Stole and maniple; tunic and dalmatic, both of great elegance, in the latter are interwoven birds and small animals and with a border of thread of gold. Next to the dalmatic his holy body is clothed with other costly robes of silk, above which there had been put around him a sheet. This was removed and instead were put upon it others much more elegant and costly, of silk, purple cloth, and fine linen. There were likewise in the coffin an altar of silver, a cloth for covering the sacramental elements, a golden chalice and paten, and a pair of scissors and his ivory comb perforated in the middle.

After the verification of the body of St. Cuthbert and the satisfaction of the curiosity of those present, for which purpose it would seem the coffin had been conveyed from the cloister tomb to the choir of the new church, the relics were carried shoulder high, preceded by all the caskets containing the other saints, in a glorious procession. As it issued forth the people pressed around, making it difficult to proceed, and the voices of the singers were

drowned in the exultations of the enthusiastic multitude. They compassed the church, then halted, outside, for the bishop's sermon, which was so long that the people became weary, "touching many points," we are told, "not at all appropriate to the solemnity," when suddenly the brightness of the day was overcast and a violent torrent of rain began to fall. The monks, interrupting the sermon, snatched up the coffin and hastened into church, where it was placed in the apse behind the high altar.

Of the shrine at this period we know but little, save that the feretory rested on a stone slab which was supported by nine pillars, and that around it lamps were perpetually burning, to defray the expense of which various donations are recorded.

The eastern apse of the church became dangerous, and in the year 1235 we have an *Indulgence* of the Bishop of Ely, in which he says the body of St. Cuthbert, "more precious than gold and precious stones, reposes in the church of Durham, where, above his sacred sepulchre, devout men of old erected a vaulted roof of stone, which at the present day is so full of fissures and cracks that its fall seems approaching." At the end of the thirteenth century the eastern part of the cathedral was rebuilt in the form we now have it, including the space containing the shrine, which is constantly called the *feretory*, a space 37 feet long and 23 feet broad, in the midst of which stood the shrine.

In A.D. 1372 John Lord Neville of Raby spent £200 upon the substructure of the shrine. The work was enclosed in chests in London—there is a tradition it came from France—and was conveyed by sea to Newcastle at the cost of the donor, but thence it was taken by road to Durham at the cost of the Church. He also gave the altar screen, which also forms the west side of the feretory, or chapel of the shrine.

The shrine had now reached the completed beauty as known to our forefathers and to the streams of pilgrims until the disastrous day of Henry VIII., and the description given in the *Rites* conveys some idea of what it was:—

"In the midst of the feretory the sacred shrine was exalted with most curious workmanship of fine and costly green marble, all worked and gilt with gold, having four seats, or places convenient beneath the shrine for the pilgrims and infirm sitting on their knees to lean and rest in during their prayers and offerings to God and holy S. Cuthbert for his miraculous relief and succour, which being never wanting, made the shrine to be so richly invested that it was esteemed to be one of the most sumptuous monuments in all England, so great were the offerings and jewels bestowed upon it even in these latter days, as is more patent in the history of the church at large.

"At the west end of the shrine of S. Cuthbert was a little altar adjoining to it on which to say Mass, only upon the great and holy Feast of S. Cuthbert's day in Lent; at which solemnity the Prior and the whole convent did keep open household in the Frater-house, and did dine together on that day, and on no day else in the year. And at this feast, and certain other festival days, in time of divine service they were accustomed to draw up the cover of S. Cuthbert's shrine, being of wainscot, whereunto was fastened unto every corner of the said cover, to a loop of iron, a very strong cord, which cords were all fastened together over the midst of the cover, and a strong rope was fastened unto the loops or binding of the said cords, which rope did run up and down in a pulley under the vault over S. Cuthbert's Feretory, for the drawing up of the said shrine; and the said rope was fastened into a loop of iron to the north pillar of the feretory, having six silver bells fastened to the said rope, so that at the drawing up of the cover the bells made such a good sound that it stirred all the people's hearts that were within the church to repair unto it, and to make their prayers to God and holy S. Cuthbert, and that the beholders might see the glorious ornaments thereof. Also the cover had at every corner two rings made fast which did run up and down

on four staves of iron when it was being drawn, which staves were fast to every corner of the marble that S. Cuthbert's coffin did lie upon; which cover was all gilded over, and on either side was painted four lively images curious to the beholders; and on the east end was painted the picture of our Saviour sitting on a rainbow to give judgment, very lively to the beholders; and on the west end of it was the picture of our Lady and our Saviour on her knee; and on the top of the cover from end to end was most fine carved work cut out with dragons and other beasts, most artificially wrought, and the inside was varnished with a sanguine colour that it might be more perspicuous to the beholders; and at every corner of the cover was a lock to keep it close, but at such times as was fit to show it.

"Also within the said feretory [a name applied here to the chapel], both on the north side and on the south, there were almeries of fine wainscot, being varnished and finely painted, and gilded over with little images very seemly and beautiful to behold, for the relics belonging to S. Cuthbert to lie in, that were offered to him. When the cover to his shrine was drawn up then the said almeries were opened that every man who came hither at the time might see the holy relics, gifts, and jewels therein, so that for these things and other relics that hung about within the said feretory upon the irons, was accounted to be the most sumptuous and richest jewels in all this land, with the beauty of the fine little images that did stand in the French-pier within the feretory, for great were the gifts and godly devotion of kings and queens and other estates at that time towards God and holy S. Cuthbert in that church."

The French-pier here mentioned was the altar screen, the east side of which formed the west side of the chapel. The account goes on to describe the lights on the screen, and the banners which were kept around the shrine.

From this description we have no difficulty in picturing the appearance of the shrine; the structure was in principle the same as St. Edward's at Westminster, St. Edmund's

at Bury, etc., and the same means were taken for the preservation of the offerings by the use of a cover.

Near the shrine there stood a money-box called the "pix of S. Cuthbert" which had a slit in the lid just such as is used nowadays. Into this were dropped the offerings of the poor pilgrims whose gifts were not costly enough to hang about the shrine; but it proved a productive source of income. In the year 1385–6 it yielded the sum of £63 17*s.* 8*d.*, which according to the current value of money would make the offerings for that year amount to £1,277 13*s.* 4*d.*

By the diligence of the late Canon Raine a list of some of the custodians of the shrines of Sts. Cuthbert and Bede has been gathered from various sources, together with their associates who assisted in the responsibility of such great treasures, and who held one of the two keys of the above-mentioned box. The assistant is first called, in the yearly rolls, his *socius*, then his *consocius*, but by a blunder first made in 1440, which was perpetuated in after years, he was called his *conscius*. It is the most complete list of these officers existing, and as such is reproduced, with several additions from the Feretrars' Rolls recently printed by Canon Fowler :—

	Feretrar	Consocius
1022	Elfred Westoue . .	——
1333	Peter de Hilton . .	——
1372	John de Cornwall . .	——
1375	Hugh de Hawick . .	John de Alverton.
1378	John de Alverton . .	Robert de Blackburne.
1379	John de Alverton . .	Thomas Dautre.
1383	Richard de Segbrok . .	——
1385	Thomas de Lyth . .	——
1391	Robert de Langchester .	——
1398	Thomas de Lyth . .	John Durham.
1402	William Poklyngton . .	——

	Feretrar	Consocius
1409	William Southwick . .	——
1411	Robert de Crayk . .	John Durham.
1418	John Durham . . .	John Lethom.
1420	,, ,, . . .	Roger de Langchestre.
1421	,, ,, . . .	Thomas Hesilrig.
1423	,, ,, . . .	Thomas Ayre.
1425	,, ,, . (solus)	
1427	,, ,, . . .	Thomas Hexham.
1428	,, ,, . (solus)	
1433	,, ,, . . .	John Gaytesheved.
1434	Richard Barton . .	Thomas Lewyn.
1439	John Burnby . . .	Robert Emylton.
1441	Robert Emylton . .	John Rypon.
1444	William Dalton . .	,, ,,
1453	John Pencher . . .	William Kellow.
1457	John Warner . . .	Thomas Caly.
1458	,, ,, . . .	Richard Bylingham and John Greyne.
1459	,, ,, . . .	John Steylle.
1460	John Warner and Richard Blacborne .	,, ,,
1480	John Lee . . .	Richard Steylle.
1488	John Manby . . .	John Claxton.
1501	Robert Werdal . .	,, ,,
1513	John Halywell . .	John Thrilkeld.
1525	Richard Harryngton . .	Cuthbert Heghyngton.
1536	William Wylom . .	,, ,,
1538	William Watson . .	George Bates.

The Feretrar, or shrine keeper, at Durham had a busy time. It was his duty to attend personally when anyone of consequence made a pilgrimage to St. Cuthbert, or to offer anything at his shrine, and if he requested to have the cover drawn so as to see it—

"The Clerk of the Feretory gave intelligence to his master the Sub-Prior, the Keeper of the Feretory. And then the said

master did bring the keys of the shrine with him, giving them to the clerk to open the locks. His office was to stand by and to see it drawn. And when they had made their prayers, and did offer anything to it, if it were either gold, silver, or jewels, straightway it was hung on the shrine. And if it were any other thing, as an Unicorn horn, Elephant tooth, or such like thing, then it was hung within the Feretory (chapel) at the end of the shrine. And when they had made their prayers the clerk did let down the cover thereof, and did lock it at every corner, giving the keys to the Sub-Prior again."

The same order was observed when the cover was drawn during the singing of *Te Deum*, at High Mass, and for *Magnificat*. He also had to attend on the banner of St. Cuthbert, which contained the Corporax cloth used by the saint at Mass, and to give similar attention to the shrine of St. Bede in the presence of pilgrims or when it was carried in procession.

In the Feretrars' Rolls from 1375 to 1538 are many interesting entries to do with the shrine and its keeper.[1] The latter received a sum of five shillings on the feast days of St. Cuthbert, and his colleague three and fourpence. Another official, termed the Clerk of the Shrine, usually received twenty shillings a year; it would be his duty to keep the accounts.

A frequent entry is "For repairing of rings at the shrine, 5*s.* 0*d.*," an evidence of the constant wear by frequent expositions to pilgrims. The steady influx of gifts necessitated a great deal of work in fixing applicable offerings to the shrine. It must have been a good item in the income of the goldsmith, who charged sevenpence for setting an emerald.

	s.	*d.*
For two locks for the doors of the shrine . .	3	0
A cloth for the shrine	6	8
For repairing the box of S. Cuthbert . . .	0	6

[1] See *Durham Account Rolls*, 3 vols., Surtees Society, 1898–1900.

	s.	*d.*
For a jewel bought and given to the shrine . .	4	0
For four bells bought for the shrine . . .	11	8
For a cord bought for the shrine . . .	11	8
The expences of a London goldsmith and his men coming from York to Durham to see the shrine, by order of the Lord Bishop . . .	18	0
For writing a prayer around the shrine. . .	0	6
Received 20*d.* for the old cord taken from the shrine.		

These are but a few representative notes which associate the life of that time with the present, and these little matter-of-fact entries help one to realise the care bestowed on the shrine's maintenance.

The inventories of relics, vestures, and jewels in the care of the feretrar are of tremendous length. There is in the York MS. a list of relics preserved at Durham about the end of the twelfth century, another compiled in 1383 by Richard de Segbruk, keeper of the shrine, and a third by Thomas de Lyth in 1401. A supplementary list was made in 1417, altogether making a very large collection. The chief relics, in the building termed the feretory, were arranged on three shelves or gradines on the south side of the shrine; on the lowest of these stood an enamelled coffer containing the cloak in which St. Cuthbert lay on the ground for eleven years. In another part were the gloves of St. Cuthbert, in an ivory coffer adorned with gold and silver.

The destruction of this shrine must be taken from the *Rites*, with which all other authorities agree.[1]

"The sacred shrine of holy S. Cuthbert was defaced in the Visitation that Dr. Lee, Dr. Henley, and Master Blythman held at Durham for the subverting of such monuments, in the time of King Henry VIII., in his suppression of the abbeys, where they found many worthy and goodly jewels, but especially one precious stone belonging to the shrine, which, by the estimate

[1] Harpsfield; MSS. Hunter, 44 and 45; MS. C. and Butler.

of those three visitors and their skilful lapidaries, was of value sufficient to redeem a prince.[1] After the spoiling of his ornaments and jewels, coming nearer to his body, thinking to have found nothing but dust and bones, and finding the chest that he did lie in very strongly bound with iron, the goldsmith did take a great fore hammer of a smith and did break the said chest open, and when they had opened the chest, they found him lying whole, uncorrupt, with his face bare, and his beard as it had been a fortnight's growth, and all his vestments upon him as he was accustomed to say Mass, and his met wand of gold lying beside him. Then, when the goldsmith did perceive that he had broken one of his legs when he did break open the chest, he was very sorry for it, and did cry, 'Alas, I have broken one of his legs.' Then Dr. Henley, hearing him say so, did call upon him, and did bid him cast down his bones. Then he made answer again that he could not get them in sunder, for the sinews and the skin held it that it could not part. Then Dr. Lee did step up to see if it were so or not, and did turn himself about, and did speak in Latin to Dr. Henley that he was lying whole. Yet Dr. Henley would give no credit to his word, but still did cry, 'Cast down his bones.' Then Dr. Lee made answer, 'If ye will not believe me come up yourself and see him.' Then did Dr. Henley go up to him, and did handle him, and did see that he lie whole and uncorrupt. Then he commanded them to take him down, and so it happened contrary to their expectations, that not only his body was whole and uncorrupt, but the vestments wherein his body lay and wherewithal he was accustomed to say Mass, were safe, fresh, and not consumed. Whereupon the Visitors commanded he should be carried into the vestry, where he was close and safely kept in the inner part till such time as they did further know the King's pleasure what to do with him, and upon notice of the King's pleasure therein the Prior and Monks buried him in the ground, under a fair marble stone, which remains to this day, where his shrine was exalted."

[1] This was probably the jewel which Sir William Scrope was commanded by the king to offer at the shrine by way of penance, and which was to be of the value of at least £500. 1,578½ ounces of precious metal were taken from the shrine besides the innumerable jewels.

Harpsfield says, in consequence of the command of Bishop Tunstall a grave was made in the ground in that very spot previously occupied by his precious coffin.

This last statement has been disputed, but confirmation of its correctness is obtained from the treasury bills of expenses of the church from Michaelmas, 1541. In November of that year 2*s.* was paid to John Symson for four days' work in removing the tombs of Sts. Cuthbert and Bede, by Robert Dalton, the First Prebendary of the Seventh Stall. In addition to which the original bill for making the grave for St. Cuthbert is extant, of which we subjoin a translation :—

1542.—After the feast of Michael.

Concerning S. Cuthbert

Given to George Skelis, on the first day of January (1541–2), for two days and a half about making the grave of S. Cuthbert . . .	15*d.*
Item, given to the same for John Paxton (at the rate of 3*d.*), John Wylliamson (at the rate of 3*d.*), John Oxenett (at the rate of 3*d.*), for two days and a half	22½*d.*
Item, given to the same for William Tayller (at the rate of 3*d.*), for a day and a half . . .	4½*d.*
Item, given to Cuthbert Johnson for two days and a half . . .	15*d.*
Item, given for 5 ells of linen for a sheet, at 8*d.* per ell . . .	3*s.* 4*d.*
Item, given for a load of lime . .	4*d.*
Item, given to Stokell for nails and iron bars	4*d.*
Item, given to George Skeles for four days at the Feast of Epiphany, working at the grave of S. Cuthbert, and for a morning . . .	2*s.* 2*d.*

Concerning S. Cuthbert

Item, given to the same for John Paxton, John Wylliamson, John Oxinet, four days at 3*d.* per day ; and for a morning's work, to each a penny ; and for William Tayler, at 3*d.* per day 3 days, and a morning's work at a penny ; and for Richard Yggle and Roland Robson, half a day 4*d.*	.	4*s.* 5*d.*
Item, given to Cuthbert Johnson for himself (at 6*d.* per day), and his servant three days, for working at the grave of S. Cuthbert, and at the marble stone, and at the church on account of the wind	. . .	2*s.* 3*d.*
Item, given to his wife for sewing of a sheet	. . . .	2*d.*

This should dispose once for all of the reported tradition that the resting-place of St. Cuthbert is a secret known only to three Benedictine monks of the Roman obedience, a tradition unheard of until the early part of the last century. And now we come to that which leaves no loophole whatsoever for the existence of that tradition ; the opening of the tomb and examination of the contents of the coffin on the 17th of May, 1827, in the presence of some of the chapter, and recorded by that renowned antiquary, Canon Raine, who was among those present.

The slab of Frosterly marble was with difficulty removed, beneath about twenty inches of soil another large slab of grey stone was reached, it was the grave-stone of one Richard Heswell, monk, placed in an inverted position, name downwards, to avoid the possibility of mistaking it for his grave. The monks were not allowed burial within the church, but found their resting-places in the cemetery garth. This slab covered a stone-built grave 7 feet long, 4 feet wide, and between 4 feet and 5 feet in depth.

At the bottom of this grave was a large coffin of oak in a decaying state. This was the outer chest, made new in 1542.

After the fragments of this were removed another coffin was found, more decayed than the former ; in some places portions of a white, adhesive substance, which had been a covering or envelope, were clinging to it. This, no doubt, was the coffin described in 1104 as the second coffin of St. Cuthbert, which was then covered with skins. The lid was especially rotten, and at the lower end fragments of the wood were confused with a number of loose bones—a skull, ribs, arm, leg, and thigh bones, and the skull and rib bones of an infant. The adult relics Raine thinks to have been of the early bishops of Lindisfarne, placed in St. Cuthbert's coffin in 875, and taken out in 1104. They had been preserved in the feretory, and at the Dissolution may have been buried with the patron. Probably the sheet mentioned in the foregoing accounts may have been to enclose them, as it was seen not to have been used for the saint. In the inventory of relics numerous entries of the "bones of the Holy Innocents" accounts for the remains of infants.

When the wood and bones were removed the lid of a third coffin was found, in an advanced state of decay. It will be remembered that at the investigation in 1104 the coffin was enveloped in a coarse cloth saturated in wax, which, after the examination, was renewed, that the coffin was beautifully carved, and that two iron rings were fixed in the lid. Here all was again found. One iron ring was found, and the loop which held the other in its place. Numerous fragments of coarse waxed linen were still adhering to the wood, and the carving or incised lines were in some places entirely filled with the wax. And what are the carvings, now being examined, on the identical coffin in which the body of St. Cuthbert was

laid in A.D. 698? The lid, ends, sides, and bottom were occupied by engravings, the subjects delineated by incised lines have been cut upon the surface, partly with a knife or chisel, and "partly by some such instrument

INCISED FIGURE OF ST. JOHN

as the scrieve of the woodman," *furrowed in the wood*, as Reginald states.

Nearly all the figures have the nimbus, the right hand in benediction, and the left holding a book. St. John, on one of the sides here represented, is quarter the size

of the original, and is the most perfect. Many of them are mere fragments, but some are yet discernible with their names—St. Thomas, St. Peter with the keys, St. Andrew, St. Michael, St. Paul. The figures on the lid and bottom were of a larger size, but in a yet more imperfect state—the lower part of St. Luke, the Virgin and Child, and portions of the winged emblems of the Evangelists and of various names.

The next step was to examine the body of the saint which had for so many ages commanded the devotions of the faithful. By an arrangement of boards the sacred remains were raised to the surface in an undisturbed state.

The outer covering had been linen of the finest texture, though only small pieces were left. In the two records of the state of the relics in 1104 we are told that these coverings—silk, cloth, and linen—were put around the body for its preservation. The robes within the winding-sheet were still more decayed, so that it was impossible to detach them one from the other. Canon Raine says that he found five distinct silks, which we may readily conceive to be the remains of tunic, dalmatic, chasuble, and the two swathings beneath the winding-sheet.

After the linen the first was of thin silk of amber colour, the ornamental parts being done in gold leaf.

The second was of thick, soft silk in a variety of rich colours. The ground within the circle was red, the boat red, the ducks yellow, the water purple, the porpoises yellow and red; the border is purple, with yellow foliage and fruit and red stalks; and the border at the bottom is red. The learned Raine thinks the rabbits, ducks, and porpoises refer especially to St. Cuthbert and his island hermitage, where rabbits abound, where the eider ducks are known as "Cuthbert's ducks," and around the rocks of which sport schools of porpoises; if so, may not the

fantastic vessel which he calls an "urn or flower basket" be an idealised form of the traditionary floating coffin?

The third fabric (the chasuble?) was of amber silk, diapered, edged with lace "resembling the coach lace of the present day," $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch wide.

The fourth (the dalmatic?) of purple and crimson silk, diapered with crosses.

The fifth (the tunicle?) of rich silk damask, figured in ovals enclosing an urn supported by griffins, in crimson and purple.

The stole, broken into five pieces, is in other respects perfect, the gold in the fabric being quite brilliant. It is $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, and the groundwork is entirely of flat gold thread. Figures are embroidered upon it, mostly in crimson, the prominent folds being outlined in gold thread. The pavements on which the figures stand are of various hues outlined in gold; the nimbi are of scarlet and gold, the names green, though in a few cases red. The border is scarlet ornament on a gold ground edged with scarlet and brown. It is lined with thin dark red silk, having a narrow stripe of gold at either side.

At the back of the neck is a quatrefoil enclosing an Agnus Dei.

The figures round the stole were Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Amos, and Obadiah, Hosea, Joel, Habakkuk, Jonas, Zacharias, and Nahum, and a fragment of another, with their names scattered from side to side.

The right end is embroidered on the obverse with a half figure of St. John; on the reverse is the inscription "ÆLFFLÆD FIERI PRECEPIT," proving that the stole was made by order of Ælfled. The obverse of the left end has the half figure of St. Thomas, and on the reverse, "PIO EPISCOPO FRIDESTANO," showing that it was made for the Pious Bishop Frithestan.

The maniple is $32\frac{1}{4}$ inches exclusive of the fringe. The

centre, resting on the wrist or the first finger—for it was worn under the thumb and fell across the palm and back of the hand in those days—has a quatrefoil enclosing the Divine hand of the Eternal Father. At one side are St. Gregory the Pope and Peter the Deacon, the termination figuring St. John Baptist, and on the reverse, "PIO EPISCOPO FRIDESTANO." On the other side are St. Sixtus Bishop and Laurence the Deacon; on the termination is St. James, at the back of which we are told that Ælfled commanded this to be made.

This Ælfled was queen of Edward the Elder, and had these vestures made for Frithestan, bishop of Winchester A.D. 905–931. The question arises, How came these on the body of St. Cuthbert? Bishop Frithestan, who had resigned his see in 931, died the following year. Soon after his death Athelstan, son of King Edward, visited the tomb of St. Cuthbert at Chester-le-Street, and there offered among other things a stole, a maniple, a girdle, and two bracelets of gold. There can be no doubt that by these means St. Cuthbert became possessed of the vestures worked for the other prelate, especially as there were also found the girdle and bracelets. The girdle or zone was 37 inches long and $\frac{7}{8}$ inch wide, woven with a similar flat gold wire as the stole, and red thread, and is lined with silk. The bracelets were exactly the same as the zone, but with a checked border, and measure 9 inches in circumference.

When they were placed on the saint's body is unknown, probably by the relic collector Elfred, who used to take all sorts of liberties with his sainted patron; and, as Reginald says, he opened the coffin with impunity and wrapped him in whatever robes he thought fit.

There was also found a second maniple which must have been put in some time after 1104, and which from its

workmanship evidently dates from about the middle of the thirteenth century.

Upon the breast was a pectoral cross of gold set with fifty-three garnets, one in each angle, and twelve upon each of the arms. Raine considers this to be a personal relic of the saint during his lifetime. There were found upon his breast a super-altar, an ivory comb, and a burse.

The "silver altar" coeval with the saint and mentioned by our two historians, was of oak 6 inches by $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches and about $\frac{1}{3}$ thick, covered with a thin plate of silver slightly raised at the margin, attached to the wood by silver nails. It is, however, so fragmentary that it is impossible to determine the inscription. The underside had also been covered with silver, on which was figured a saint in priestly robes, and letters which might have been either *Peter* or *Paul* the Apostle. The exposure to the air and the moving caused the wooden part to fall to pieces, but on two of the fragments is sufficient evidence to show that it had been used as a portable altar before it was embellished with silver; this is an inscription "In honour of S. Peter," and two crosses deeply incised.

The comb, mentioned by Reginald, and exactly corresponding to his description, was lying in the folds of one of the uppermost robes, upon the lower part of the breast of St. Cuthbert. The matter had so perished that it broke at the slightest touch.

We hear of a comb for the first time in connection with St. Cuthbert when the aforementioned Elfred (about 1022) used to say that he periodically renewed the saint's tonsure (page 181), and, as he fabricated the silver scissors for that purpose, he is likely also to have been the maker of the comb.

Near the same position was the bourse which formerly held the corporal used by the saint at Mass, but which

had been enclosed in the middle of a banner to be carried to the battle of Neville's Cross, October 17th, 1346.

The bones were then laid bare; of course they were disjointed, but all whole and in their respective positions except the fingers and feet. The right hand, it could be seen, had been raised on to the breast in benediction.

These relics of St. Cuthbert were reverently laid in a new coffin with the other relics as before, and again placed in the grave.

Again have those relics been exposed, this time for an object which comes within the scope of our present subject, for it was to take out the fragments of the original wooden coffin which had been made and carved by the monks in 698.

It was on March 1st, 1899, that the grave was reopened and the gravestone of the monk Heswell again removed. Once more was seen the almost complete skeleton of Father Cuthbert, one of the greatest of English saints, and the frontal bone of the large skull of the Northumbrian king, St. Oswald, together with other sacred relics. The grave from whence it was raised was largely constructed with slabs of Purbeck marble, which may have formed part of the shrine.

The fragments of the wooden coffin have now been reconstructed, and we can again see the actual primitive shrine of St. Cuthbert which was made over twelve hundred years ago. The outer lid has a figure of our Lord on a large scale incised upon it, and at the angles are the evangelistic symbols. At one side are figures of archangels, and on the other side are two rows of the apostles with St. Paul and another whose identity is undecided, making in all fourteen figures. The head of the coffin was wider than the other end, and it contains figures of the archangels St. Michael and St. Gabriel, while on the

panel at the foot is engraved the figure of the Blessed Virgin with the infant Saviour on her knees.

The so-called coffin of 1827 was but a packing-case or crate which fell to pieces when touched. A new oaken chest was now made with a horizontal partition. In the lower partition the bones of the "Holy Innocents" and the miscellaneous relics were placed; and in the upper portion the relics of St. Cuthbert and the cloven skull of St. Oswald were reverently enclosed. On the lid of this chest was incised the cross of St. Cuthbert, surmounted by a crown in reference to King Oswald.

This chest of relics was restored to the grave on March 17th.

CHAPTER V

SHRINES OF ROYAL SAINTS

NEARLY all the Christian kingdoms of Europe number one or more of their monarchs in the calendar of the saints. England was by no means eclipsed by others, and from among her kings, either of the whole land or of certain provinces, are many who, by their exemplary lives, are appropriately numbered in the multitude of the sanctified, whose tombs became shrines, and whose holy reputation attracted throngs of pilgrims.

All the canonised kings are, however, of the Saxon era, and since St. Edward the Confessor none of our monarchs have received such a distinction.

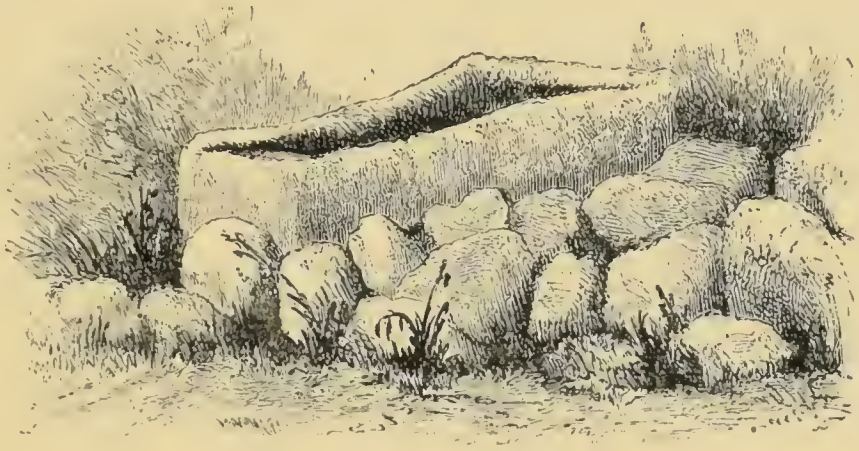
Edward II., buried at Gloucester, and Henry VI., buried at Windsor, were popularly proclaimed as saints, their tombs were visited, and offerings were made, even miracles were attributed to them. This was especially the case with the latter; images of Henry were set up in many churches and votive tapers were burnt before them, until the ecclesiastical authorities intervened and put an end to such uncanonical veneration. Henry VIII.'s commissioners found at Caversham, Berks, the dagger with which it was said Henry VI. had been killed in the Tower; it was venerated as a relic.

Charles I. has been numbered among the saints in a half-hearted manner by the Church of England; but however fervently he might have been invoked, no visible tomb or monument exists to be considered among the

shrines, though five churches were dedicated to his memory.

ST. KENELM

Of all the kings of the province of Mercia there is but one solitary saint—St. Kenelm—the seven-years-old king. He had been murdered by the order of his jealous sister, and was placed in the calendar of the saints, partly on account of his sad fate during an age of innocence, and partly because of the extraordinary miracles which the credulous people of that time fully believed.



COFFIN OF ST. KENELM

After the murder his body was secretly buried in the forest where the tragedy had occurred until, it was said, the crime was revealed in Rome, where a dove flew into St. Peter's and let fall a strip of parchment on the high altar. Upon it was found an inscription in letters of gold, but in a strange language which no one could read. At last a student from the English School in Rome thus deciphered it: "In Clento cou bathe Kenelm Kynebearn lith under thorne havedes bereaved" (In Clent the cow pasture, Kenelm, the king's child, lieth under a thorn, bereft of his head).

The news was sent to the different provinces of England and the body was found.

The relics were carried to the Benedictine monastery of Winchcombe, and buried in the east part of the church, close to the tomb of his father King Kenulf.

Many were the pilgrims to the shrine of St. Kenelm, and a special "pilgrim's sign" was struck, for fastening to the cloak or hat of the devotee.

No description of the tomb-shrine is left, the abbey was demolished, and St. Kenelm forgotten.

During a search among the ruins in 1815 excavations around the eastern wall of the church disclosed two stone coffins, lying side by side, beneath the site of an altar; one was the size for an adult, the other long enough only for a child. The larger contained the bones of a man, in the smaller were the skull and a few of the larger bones of a child, which also contained a very long-bladed knife, thoroughly corroded.

Here then, without doubt, as Fosbroke the antiquary, who was present, concluded, were the coffin and the relics of St. Kenelm, together with the instrument of martyrdom, the larger coffin being that of his father Kenulf.

The relics of the saint and the dust of the king were thrown to the ground; the shrine and the coffin were afterwards sold and placed in the grounds of Warmington Grange.

Sacrilege was not confined to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The *Reformers* and *Rebels* left something to be desecrated as late as 1815 by people who had no such excuses as our forefathers, yet outstripped them and looked to the ancient Danish and Saxon pagans for example.

ST. OSWALD

In the kingdom of Northumbria the saints Oswald and Oswin were kings worthy of emulation by modern monarchs. The shrines of St. Oswald were many, a natural

sequence to the brutality of his conqueror Penda, who mutilated the body of his victim on the battlefield (August 5th, 642).

The arms and head of the dead king were impaled on stakes until St. Oswald's successor removed them to various localities. His head was buried at Lindisfarne and placed within the coffin of St. Cuthbert, in which it remains to this day, in the cathedral of Durham.

The arms of St. Oswald were enshrined in silver at Bamborough, while the body, which had been buried on the field of battle, was afterwards translated to Bardney. In those days of Norse piracy all sorts of expedients were resorted to for the preservation of treasure, and the reliquary of St. Oswald was saved from the marauding Danes by the Prior Athelwold secreting it in the straw of his bed. In 909 it was again translated by Ethelred, earl of Mercia, and Elfleda, the daughter of King Alfred, to St. Peter's Abbey in Gloucester, where his shrine was a conspicuous object in one of the chapels until the sixteenth century.

ST. OSWIN

After his death in 651, St. Oswin was buried in the churchyard of St. Mary, at the mouth of the river Tyne. Reported miracles led to an oratory being built over the grave. This was destroyed by the apparently omnipresent Danes, the place was deserted and St. Oswin forgotten. The royal saint is said to have been discontented at this negligence, and called upon a monk in his sleep, exhorting brother Edmund to make it known that a saint lay forgotten beneath the pavement. Search was made and the relics found in 1065; and the bishop translated them into an honourable place within the church.

When Robert de Mowbray built a great church at Tynemouth, St. Oswin at last had a sumptuous shrine.

ST. ALKMUND

St. Alkmund was the son of Alcred, king of Northumbria. In 774, when a mere youth, he was obliged to fly with his father from the hands of his rebellious subjects, who contracted a league with the Danes. For upwards of twenty years both father and son lived among the Picts, when his people, growing tired of the tyranny of the Northmen, prayed him to return. Alkmund put himself at the head of this party and won several battles. There is some confusion among his chroniclers as to the mode and date of his death; but it seems most probable that he was treacherously slain by the Danes in 819. Be this as it may, he soon earned the honours of saint and martyr. Fuller unworthily sneers at his claim to sanctity, sneers which have been quoted and amplified by subsequent writers. But when we find so much uncertainty about the mode of his death, we may surely give our Anglo-Saxon forefathers and the Catholic Church of those days some credit for being acquainted with such details of his sanctity of life that justified them in his canonisation, which have not come down to our times. It is not as if he had been canonised, and then soon after dropped into oblivion, as was sometimes the case with these pre-Norman saints, whose memory was not hallowed by the conquerors. Alkmund was evidently held in high honour by the devout of his countrymen, and remained honoured until the time of the Reformation.

St. Alkmund was first buried at Lilleshall, Shropshire, where a church was either built over his relics, or else his body was placed in a church that had previously existed. Not long afterwards, through fear of an incursion of the Danes, his remains were hastily removed and translated to Derby, where he was honoured on March

19th (the day of his translation) with great devotion as patron saint of the town. Alban Butler states that an old MS. sermon preached in St. Alkmund's church, Derby, about the year 1140, has a particular account of the removal of his relics to that town, where his shrine became famous for miracles and the resort of pilgrims. Situated close to the side of one of the most important roads between the north and south of the kingdom, the fame of this shrine appears to have been maintained in all its freshness up to the time of its destruction. Its fame even long survived the time of sacrilege. Mr. Cantrell, vicar of St. Alkmund's, writing to Dr. Pegge on this subject in 1760, said: "Fuller in his *Worthies* reports of miracles here, I add that the north countrymen inquire for this tomb, and set their packs upon it."[1] A well a short distance to the north of the church goes by the name of St. Alkmund's Well; the old custom of decking this well with flowers has of late years been revived, when the clergy and choir of the parishes visit it in procession. There is still a belief in the virtues of the water of this well.

It is said that when the body of St. Alkmund was being brought into Derbyshire its guardians halted a few miles north of the county town, at Duffield, before crossing the Derwent, whilst one of their number went on to inquire as to its reception. On the site of the halt the parish church of Duffield, still bearing the dedication of St. Alkmund, was afterwards erected. When the townsfolk knew that the relics of the saintly prince were outside their walls, they received them with joy, and the church of his name was soon built for the special reception of the shrine. This church stood on the royal demesne, and in the times of the Confessor was served by a college of six priests.

[1] Pegge's MSS., Coll. of Arms, vol. iii.

The old church of St. Alkmund,[1] Derby, was completely destroyed to make way for a successor in 1844. Several well-carved pre-Norman stones were brought to light during the work of demolition, which were undoubtedly of the date of the original Saxon church. Most of them pertained to a tall upstanding churchyard cross. Two of them may have formed part of the original shrine.[2] In the churchyard near the vestry door is another memorial of the old church found in the chancel foundation. It is a massive stone 6 feet 6 inches long, with the sides carved with arcades of plain Norman arches. This eleventh- or twelfth-century stone is sometimes described as "St. Alkmund's Shrine"; but it tapers in size and seems to have been the substantial stone lid of a coffin intended to stand up above the pavement. It is of course just possible that it may have been placed over St. Alkmund's remains in Norman days.

ST. ETHELBERT

East Anglia produced two canonised kings, who have received greater attention than the last mentioned, and are more widely known even to the present day, which is explained by their patronage of larger ecclesiastical foundations, by the cathedral dedicated to St. Ethelbert being yet preserved, and by the shrine of St. Edmund having been painted by a contemporary in a beautiful manuscript which is now in the British Museum.

The one great crime of a king who otherwise bore a

[1] There are eight old churches dedicated to St. Alkmund, viz. Derby, Duffield, Shrewsbury, Atcham, Whitchurch (Salop), Bliburgh (Lincoln), Aymestrey (Hereford), conjointly to Sts. John and Alkmund; and Wormbridge (Salop), conjointly to B. V. M. and St. Alkmund.

[2] Most of these stones are now at the Derby Museum. Drawings of them appeared in the *Journal of Brit. Arch. Association*, ii. 87; also on Plate V. of Cox's *Churches of Derbyshire*, vol. iv.

FERETRUM OF ST. EDMUND

BEING TRANSLATED FROM ITS TEMPORARY REFUGE IN THE CHURCH OF ST. GREGORY-BY-ST. PAUL TO BURY ST. EDMUNDS

Harl. MS. 2,278

noble character, and the following penitence of Offa, were the cause and means of Hereford's renown. Ethelbert, the king of East Anglia, was murdered in the palace of the Mercian king in 793, while enjoying his hospitality as the suitor of Offa's daughter.

The victim appears to have been quietly buried at Marden, but his body was shortly translated to the chapel of Our Lady at Fernlega—or Saltus Silicis—which has since been known as Hereford. The whole event—a lover on the eve of his betrothal murdered under the roof of the princess's father, and said to have been at the instigation of the royal mother solely to annex the contiguous territory to the Mercian crown—was a deed that could not be hidden. In the public mind such injured innocence was enveloped in a shroud of romance, from which emanated a flood of miracles, depending not on the former life of the slain king. His death became a martyrdom, and the wonders reported as taking place at his grave caused Offa to send two bishops to Hereford to ascertain the facts. It was an opportunity not to be neglected, and the prelates used the occasion to impress upon the king the heinousness of his crime, and to exhort him to give of his substance for the good of the Church. An elaborate monument was built over the grave, and on the site of the chapel there soon arose the first cathedral of Hereford. The relics of the saint were enclosed in a magnificent shrine by Bishop Athelstan II. (1012–1056), which stood but for a short period; yet notwithstanding that the relics are supposed to have been nearly destroyed when the church was burnt in 1055, a shrine of St. Ethelbert continued to draw many pilgrims until the time of the Reformation.

The only relic of the king which is known to have been preserved at Hereford, after the fire, was a tooth, which was given to the cathedral by Philip de Fauconberg,

Canon of Hereford and Archdeacon of Huntingdon during the episcopate of Hugh Foliot (1219–1234). The form of St. Ethelbert's shrine is unknown, and the records of the cathedral are strangely quiet on the subject, while frequently mentioning the other great shrine of St. Thomas Cantilupe, which stood beneath the same roof.

The reliquary of Limoges enamel, which is in the treasury of Hereford Cathedral, has been assigned to St. Ethelbert; the scenes upon it, however, in no way represent the passion of that king, but the martyrdom and entombment of St. Thomas of Canterbury, and probably contained some relic of that prelate.

In the 1295 great list of relics, jewels, vestments, etc., pertaining to St. Paul's Cathedral, prominent mention is made of the "portable wooden feretory of St. Ethelbert"; it was plated with silver, and adorned with precious stones, coins, and rings. This feretory probably only contained some small relic of the martyred king, for it is stated that many other relics were in the same case. In addition to this feretory St. Paul's claimed to have the head of St. Ethelbert in a silver-gilt *chef*, having a crown thickly studded with jewels; and also the separate jawbone of the same king with four teeth, in a silver-gilt case encrusted with precious stones and crystals.

ST. EDMUND

On the 20th of November, 870, the Danes in the most barbarous manner gave a young king a celestial crown and England a saint. By the martyrdom of King Edmund of East Anglia they provided for their victim such fame as his memory would never have received under other circumstances.

The shrine of St. Edmund is utterly demolished, yet we know its former appearance better than any other which

Dfter his biddynge me lowly forto quite
But yit a fors or I stan to write
Upon my knees / whyl thus I stan to see
To the holi martir and meekly forto preie
precious charbocle / of martire also
O heuenly gemme / saphire o
1259
Thyn heuenly Deth of grace / let Dou falle

SHRINE OF ST. EDMUND

FROM LYDGATE'S LIFE OF ST. EDMUND

existed in this land, thanks to the art of Lydgate the monk, who has left us several illuminations of the shrine as it stood in the days of its glory.

After decapitation the head of St. Edmund was flung into a dense part of the wood at Eglesdene. The body had been buried at Hoxne, but a minute search had failed to find the head until, as legend relates, a voice repeatedly calling "Here" directed the English to a spot where they found a wolf guarding the head between its paws.

In 903 the relics were dug out of the grave and carried to Betrichesworth—the name of the village afterwards known as Bury St. Edmunds—and deposited in a wooden church.

By Turkil's invasion the place was again menaced by the too-well-remembered Danish atrocities, and in 1010 the "loculus," or chest, containing the relics was taken to London for safety by Bishop Alfun and Ailwin, the custodian of the shrine. In the church of St. Gregory, by St. Paul's Cathedral, the relics found an asylum for three years, when the danger being overpast, the chest was again translated to the town of the saint, this time in gorgeous procession, provision being made for its reception on the way. One memorial of this is with us still—the little Saxon church of wood at Greenstead, near Ongar, in Essex; and in the register of St. Edmund's Bury it is recorded: "He was also sheltered near Aungre, where a wooden chapel remains as a memorial unto this day."

A rich shrine was erected in the new church, which had been built at Bury and consecrated on St. Luke's Day, 1032, when King Cnut offered his crown to the saint.

Cnut appears to have offered his crown at so many altars and shrines over the country that a question arises as to what kind of crowns they were. Was he having new crowns made and offering the old—a new style

supplanting the former? We are told he offered his *own* crown, that which he apparently wore on the occasion, yet we find no mention of its being redeemed.

These crowns were evidently votive crowns, made for the purpose of offerings, but instead of small models they would seem to have been made of a wearable size, a detail which would greatly raise the king in the estimation of the clergy and monks of the place when they saw him remove the crown from his head and place it on the altar of the shrine; it would be more suggestive of self-sacrifice than a miniature crown, whatever its value might be.

Malmesbury tells us that Abbot Leoffston was curious as to the appearance of St. Edmund's body, and in 1050 he opened the chest and found it in a perfect state; but he is said to have been severely punished for his temerity. The saint also visited correction on others who failed to behave with becoming reverence in his church. Osgoth, a Danish nobleman, disparaged the memory of St. Edmund and walked disdainfully around the shrine, for which he was deprived of his reason until brought in contrition to the feretory.

Devotion to St. Edmund rapidly spread. King Edward the Confessor was a frequent pilgrim to his shrine, and so great was his veneration for the martyr that he was accustomed to perform the last mile on foot.

Baldwin, the first Norman abbot of Bury, translated the relics in 1095, but the inner coffin, or "theca," was not then opened.

Richard I. made a pilgrimage to St. Edmund's before setting out for the Crusade, and gave land to maintain a perpetual light before the shrine, which was afterwards the occasion of a great catastrophe. He is also said to have given the banner of Isaac, the king of Cyprus, to the shrine on his return to England.

SHRINE OF ST. EDMUND

FROM LYDGATE'S LIFE OF ST. EDMUND

When Cœur de Lion was a captive in Germany and the ransom was being collected in England, the Church had to contribute many of her treasures. But the Abbot of St. Edmund's refused to spoil the shrine. "The doors of the church shall be opened," he said; "he may enter who will—he may approach who dares." The wrath of the saint was feared, and the shrine escaped spoliation.

From the Chronicle of Jocelin of Brakelond we learn that the "glorious martyr Edmund" was dissatisfied with the want of care bestowed on his relics, and compelled the convent to erect a more splendid shrine by extreme measures—no less than a great conflagration.

Between the shrine and the high altar was a table on which two large torches of wax were constantly burning, according to the deed of gift of King Richard. On the vigil of St. Etheldreda, whilst the guardians of the shrine were asleep, one of these torches fell upon the table and set it on fire. When the monks were aroused they found the whole shrine wrapped in flames. When the fire was extinguished it was found that much of the woodwork of the shrine was burnt, and the silver plates with which it was covered scarcely hung together. Only the golden Majesty on the front of the feretory, with the jewels set in it, remained unharmed and "fairer after the fire."

Abbot Samson was at that time absent; but when he returned to the monastery he told the monks that this calamity had befallen them on account of their sins, and especially because of their "murmurings touching meat and drink." With characteristic energy he at once began the reconstruction of the shrine, which he had purposed doing, and for which he had prepared much of the marble before the fire. He himself gave fifteen golden rings, and proposed that the convent should resign their pittances for one year. To this the monks agreed; but the sacrist

afterwards found that "St. Edmund could well repair his shrine without any such aid."

During the building of the fixed shrine it was arranged that the feretory should be temporarily placed on the high altar. When the monks assembled in church that night for mattins, they were astonished to find a new chest standing on the altar, covered with white doeskins, and fastened with nails of silver. After due preparation the old chest containing the relics was stripped of the linen and silken wrappers with which it was covered, when they found that on the outside, above the breast of the body, was fastened an angel of gold, about a foot in length, with a sword in one hand and a banner in the other. Over it was inscribed "Martiris ecce zoma servat Michaelis agalma" ("Behold the martyr's body, St. Michael's image keeps"); and below it was an opening in the lid through which former custodians used to pass their hands so that they might touch the relics. This chest was then placed in the new one upon the altar.

During the following night the abbot and twelve chosen brethren privately examined the holy body; they found that it so filled the chest "that a needle could scarcely be introduced between the head or the feet and the wood." Many coverings of silk and linen were then removed, the last being of very thin silk "like the veil of some holy woman." The chest was again closed, covered in linen, and over all was placed a piece of silk brocade which had been offered at the shrine by Archbishop Hubert Walter.

After mattins the next morning the abbot assembled all the monks before the high altar and told them what had been done. With joy at the incorruptibility of their saint, with grief that they had been excluded from the great sight, "we sang with tears" *Te Deum laudamus.*

The private view had not been so secret after all, for

six other of the monks stole in uninvited, and brother John of Dias with some of the servants of the vestry had concealed themselves in the roof of the church and witnessed the proceedings from a bird's-eye point of view.

In consequence of materials being so advanced—marble shafts for supporting a new base being already polished before the disastrous 17th of October—and by hastening the work, the shrine was finished that same year—1198.

Queen Eleanor had given many exceedingly valuable jewels to the shrine, but her son John, after he succeeded to the crown, came as a pilgrim to Bury, in 1201 and again in 1203, when he offered great gifts to St. Edmund and then "prevailed" on the abbot to grant him the use of the jewels, presented by his mother, during his lifetime. It is not difficult to imagine what King John's *prevailing* would be, or whether those jewels were ever returned.

It was rumoured by his French biographers that Prince Louis, when he returned to France in 1216, carried off the body of St. Edmund. He was disappointed in his hopes of conquest, and had not even that salve to heal his wounded ambition, for the rumour was false.

The insurrection under Wat Tyler and Jack Straw was responsible for many sacrilegious outrages. Shrines were robbed of their jewels, and amongst them St. Edmund's suffered; and Abbot Cratfield, to pay for certain concessions he obtained from the pope, took £30 from the shrine.

King Henry III. had a new shrine constructed of "admirable workmanship," into which the relics of St. Edmund were translated on the 18th of February, 1269. It is this shrine, with certain alterations and greater ornamentation, which we see in Lydgate's illuminations.

When Edward I. went with his family and court to attend the feast of St. Edmund at Bury in 1285, he caused

an inspection to be made of all the weights and measures in the town, and the profits accruing from that and future inspections he granted for the repair and decoration of St. Edmund's shrine.

This king made other pilgrimages to St. Edmund in 1292 and 1294, and at each visitation left the shrine richer than it was before.

Henry VI. came as a pilgrim to the threshold of the royal martyr in 1433, and in one of Lydgate's illuminations that king is seen kneeling by the relics. It is the book containing these pictures which Lydgate presented to the king, a Life of St. Edmund,[1] which is our authority for the representations of the shrine as it stood in the fifteenth century.

Among the many miracles recorded is one which suggests that offerings of coins to this shrine were laid in the niches around the base; for there was a woman who often visited the shrine of St. Edmund under the mask of devotion, not with the design of giving, but of taking something away, and it was discovered that while she bowed in apparent veneration to kiss the shrine she licked up the money and carried it away in her mouth. This was detected only by the said miracle, for one day whilst thus stealing, it is said that her tongue and lips adhered to the stone and remained in that attitude the greater part of the day.

A MS. of Abbo's Life of St. Edmund, in Jesus College, Oxford, is entitled, *Liber feretrariorum S. Edmundi* (the book of the keepers of St. Edmund's shrine).

In the Cottonian Library[2] is the following letter to Lord Crumwell:—

"Pleasith it your lordship to be advertised that wee have been at Saynt Edmonds-Bury where we found a riche Shryne, which was very comberous to deface. Wee have takyn in the

[1] *Harl. MS.* 2278. [2] Cleo. A. 4.

seyd Monasterye in golde and sylver MMMMM marks and above, over & besyds aswell a rich crosse with emereddes, as also dyvers & sundry stones of great value.

* * * * * *

John Williams.
Richard Pollard.
Phylyp Parys.
John Smyth."

The total spoils of plate taken from the abbey in 1538–9 amounted to 1,553 oz. of gold and 10,433 of silver.

ST. EDWARD

To St. Edward the Martyr a noble and precious shrine was raised in the abbey of Shaftesbury. It was one of the great shrines, but it has already been dwelt upon in the introductory remarks (page 28).

ST. EDWARD THE CONFESSOR

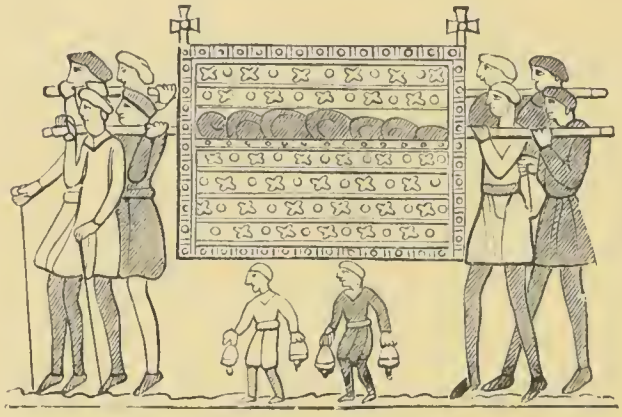
St. Edward the Confessor, the last of England's sainted kings, was enclosed in one of the primary types of shrine —the only one preserved to the present day.

In the abbey church of St. Peter at Westminster stands that one great shrine which has survived the trying vicissitudes of centuries, and the various changes of religious and political opinion. Not only the shrine, but the relics of the saint within still draw a small number of pilgrims to those hallowed precincts.

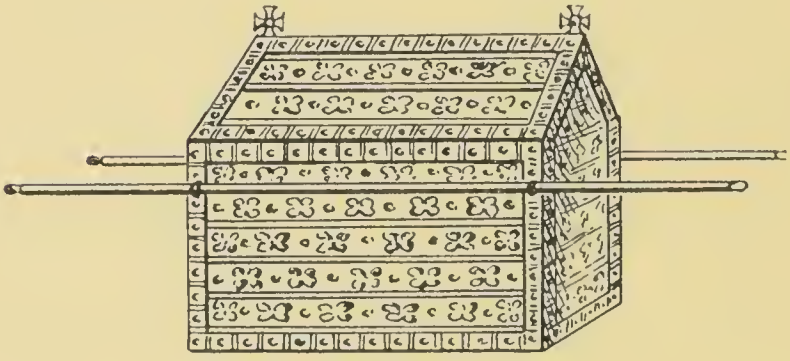
This shrine is of material assistance in enabling us to determine the form and appearance of the numerous monuments to the sanctified which once abounded in Britain's Isle; the details in each case may differ, but the scheme of design is the same. This instance is exceptionally replete with interest, because of the knowledge that we have of the style of certain successive shrines

to St. Edward, which preceded the one that is now extant.

From the Bayeux tapestry we obtain a sight of the chest in which St. Edward's body was first enclosed. It is the ordinary form of feretory—a rectangular chest, with a gabled roof, the two ends of the gable being terminated



COFFIN OF ST. EDWARD THE CONFESSOR
From the Bayeux Tapestry



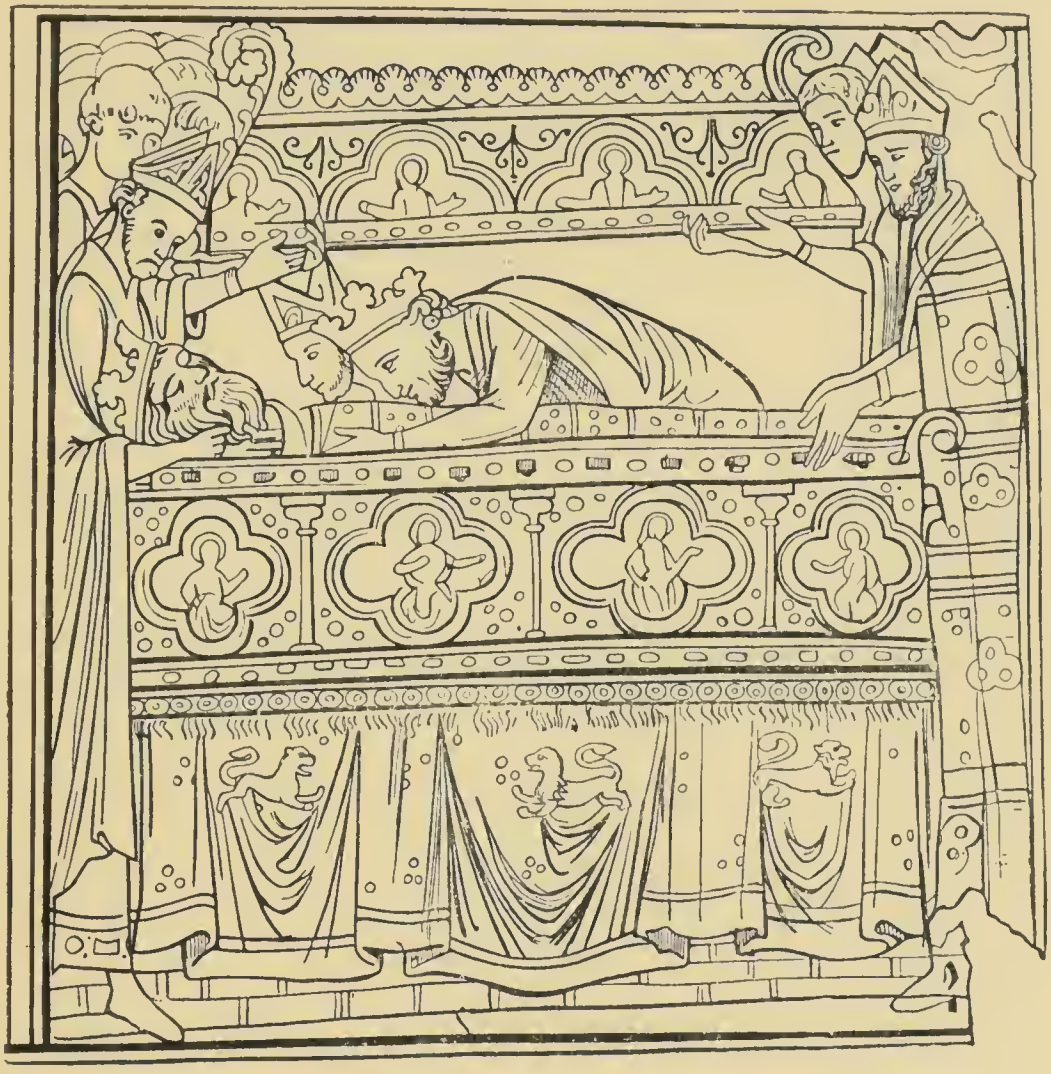
PERSPECTIVE VIEW

by crosses. To grasp this it must be observed that it is represented in elevation in the tapestry, and the accompanying perspective sketch may assist in more vividly picturing the saint's coffin.

The feretory is decorated with either painting or goldsmiths' work, most probably the latter, and the embroiderers have left part of the side open to expose the embalmed body of the king.

It is here shown on the way to burial in the newly finished church which St. Edward had built.

At the coronation of William the Conqueror in this abbey, he offered two palls or precious hangings wherewith to drape the monument; he very shortly erected a



SHRINE OF ST. EDWARD THE CONFESSOR
MS., University Library, Cambridge

sumptuous monument of stone to the saint, and employed the art of the goldsmith to enrich the monument with precious metals. It is said that he was especially moved to this action by the miracle of St. Wulfstan's staff; when the Saxon prelate had been commanded to resign his see by William, the aged bishop of Worcester laid his

crook upon the tomb of the late king from whom he had received it, and it is said that no one could remove it until St. Wulfstan picked it up with ease, and was allowed to retain his bishopric.

The tomb was opened in 1101 by the abbot Gilbert Crispin, and the relics found untouched by corruption, after which the sanctity of St. Edward was enhanced and greater veneration rendered at his tomb. Although not yet canonised at Rome, Edward was accepted as a saint by his former subjects.

At the suggestion of Thomas à Becket, King Henry II. had a magnificent shrine made, into which St. Edward was translated on October 13th, 1163.

Again are we fortunate in having representations of this new tomb, the first shrine of the now formally canonised saint. In a manuscript Life of St. Edward in the University Library, Cambridge, is a representation of the translation. Archbishop Thomas and King Henry themselves lifted the body from the old to the new tomb, assisted by the abbot of Westminster and other prelates, the monks of St. Peter's holding aloft the lid of the feretory. This picture shows the decoration of the sides and roof, the shape of the ends and finials, and the top-cresting of the feretory, which stands on a stone base draped with embroidered hangings.

Another illumination gives the elevation of one of the ends of the feretory. Here a number of pilgrims are venerating the relics, while one of them creeps through an aperture in the base—similar to that seen in the crypt tomb of St. Thomas of Canterbury (page 155)—hoping thereby to receive relief from some infirmity.

The custodian of the shrine meanwhile reads aloud the miracles of the saint.

At the two corners of the shrine, on slender shafts, stand the figures of St. John the Evangelist and St.

SHRINE OF ST. EDWARD THE CONFESSOR
MS., University Library, Cambridge

Edward, to explain which it is necessary to recall another legend which associated these two saints one with the other.

During St. Edward's lifetime a beggar came to him beseeching assistance. The king had already bestowed all his money in charity, but sooner than turn a needy brother empty away he drew from his finger a ring which he gave to the beggar. This beggar was St. John in disguise. St. John returned the ring to Edward by the hands of two pilgrims, at the same time revealing his identity.

That ring had been buried with St. Edward and at this translation it was taken from his hand and preserved as a separate relic in the sacristy. The two figures were erected at the new shrine to impress upon pilgrims the virtue of making offerings. (That the legend was not known before the ring was found on St. Edward's finger in the twelfth century in no way affects our subject or the design of the shrine.)

On this occasion the archbishop made an offering to St. Edward of an image of the Blessed Virgin wrought in ivory.

At the marriage of Henry III. with Eleanor, in 1236, he ordered that an image of the queen should be made to decorate the shrine.

The manuscript above mentioned was written by a monk of Westminster for Queen Eleanor, and the illustrations may be regarded as true representations of the shrine shortly before it was replaced by one yet more beautiful. The figures in the first scene of the translation would of course be imaginary, but not so the shrine, that was drawn by one who was constantly seeing it, and doubtless sat, as many another does nowadays, with board upon knees in front of the object he wished to copy.

In 1241 King Henry III. caused a new shrine of the

SHRINE OF ST. EDWARD THE CONFESSOR

SOUTH-EAST VIEW

purest gold and the most costly jewels to be made entirely at his own expense, employing "picked workmen" for the purpose, to whose credit Matthew of Paris pays the tribute of saying that the workmanship exceeded the materials.

The work was begun and we have the king's mandate for certain payments :—

"Deliver of our treasures to our beloved clerk Edward, the son of Otho, 258*l.* 9*s.* 3½*d.* for the acquittance of the works done by our order at Westminster, from the day of the Holy Trinity, in the 25th year of our reign, to the feast of SS. Simon and Jude next following. Deliver also to the same 10 marks for a certain wooden shrine for the work of S. Edward, made by our order; and to the same 6*l.* 10*s.* for marble bought for the same shrine by our order."

To provide for the completion of the work in the event of his own death, Henry left five hundred marks of silver in a will made in 1253.

In the rebuilding of the abbey church Henry overshadowed the patron — St. Peter — by honouring St. Edward. For him was the plan so arranged that it provided a special chapel on a raised platform behind the high altar to contain his shrine.

The abbot of Westminster—Richard de Ware—had gone to Rome, where he saw the magnificent shrines in the churches of the Eternal City, and to this visit of two years' duration must be attributed the influence brought to bear on the design of St. Edward's shrine, and the materials used in its construction.

Abbot Ware returned to England in 1260 bringing with him rich porphyry stone with other materials, and two workmen—Peter and Oderic—who were skilled in mosaic work, to beautify the shrine, on which the name of one "Roman citizen" can still be read.

While yet in the course of construction, Henry became

financially involved, and took from the shrine some of those jewels he had given to it, and pawned them for his own necessities; he however bound himself to restore them under pain of having his own chapel laid under an interdict, and this he did within two years.

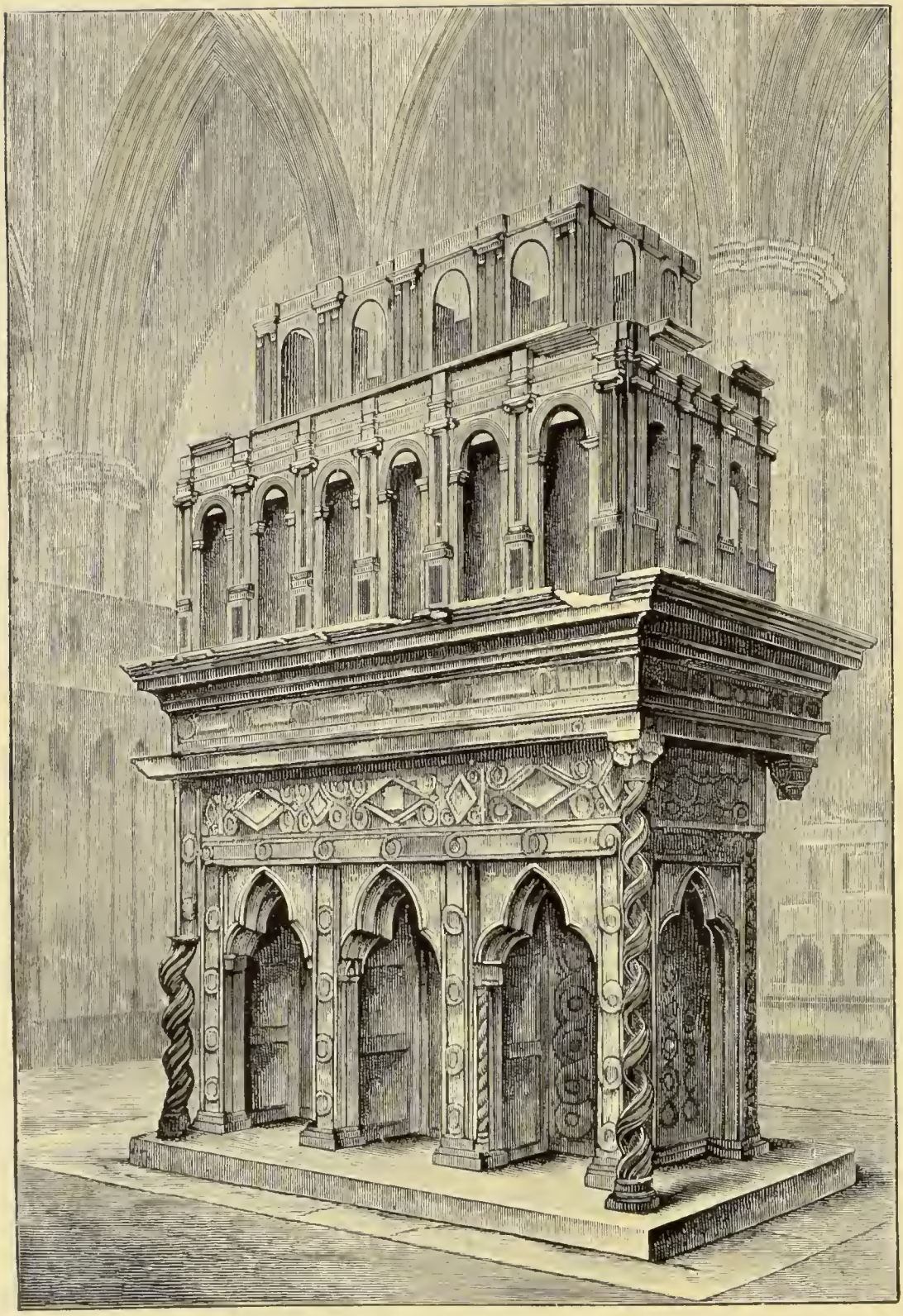
From the document[1] containing a list of those jewels appertaining to the feretory which the king borrowed, the following may be quoted as revealing the riches, and the mode of decorating, of the feretory:—

Six gold kings set with precious stones varying in value from £48 to £103 each.			
S. Edmund, Crown set with two large sapphires, a ruby and other precious stones, valued at	£86		
King, holding in his right hand a flower, with sapphires and emeralds in the middle of the crown, and a great garnet on the breast, and otherwise set with pearls and small stones	£56	4	4
Five golden angels	£30		
Blessed Virgin and Child, set with rubies, emeralds, and garnets	£200		
S. Peter holding in one hand a church, in the other the keys, trampling on Nero, with a large sapphire in his breast	£100		
A Majesty with an emerald in the breast . .	£200		
A golden chain with cameos	£228		

The value of the whole list comes to £1,234 11*s.* of the money of that day, or about £29,630 of the present time.

The shrine was at last completed in 1269, and on October the 13th—the feast of the first translation—the body of St. Edward was again translated from the shrine in which Henry II. had laid it before the high altar to the more eastward position which it has occupied—except for one short interval—ever since.

[1] Pat. Rot. 51 Hen. III. mem. 18.



SHRINE OF ST. EDWARD THE CONFESSOR

NORTH-EAST VIEW

The pomp attending the ceremony was unsurpassed even by the similar function of St. Thomas' relics. The aged king, with Richard his brother, Edward and Edmund, his two sons, supported the golden feretory of the Confessor.

An inscription round the cornice of the shrine, recording both the name of the royal donor and the workman, is covered by more modern plaster, except those words in italics, which are exposed by the partial destruction of the material veil.

"ANNO MILENO DOMINI, CUM SEPTUAG ENO (?) ET BIS CENTENO, CUM COMPLETO QUASI DENO HOC OPUS EST FACTUM QUOD PETRUS *DVXIT IN ACTVM ROMANVS CIVIS, HO*MO CAUSAM NOSCERE SI VIS REX FUIT HENRICUS SANCTI PRÆSENTIS AMICUS."

It is thus translated by Rapius :—

"In the year of our Lord 1270, this work was finished by Peter, a Roman citizen. Reader, if thou wilt know how it was done ; it was because Henry was the present saint's friend."

Many were the valuable offerings made at the shrine. Henry III. gave a golden vessel containing the heart of his nephew Henry. Edward I. presented a piece of the True Cross set in gold and precious stones ; to St. Edward he also offered the Stone of Destiny from Scone and the Scottish crown and sceptre ; and had three marble columns made and placed around the shrine. Edward II. at his coronation gave gold from which to fashion two figures of St. John the Evangelist as a pilgrim and St. Edward with a ring, in which is seen the desire to perpetuate the legend related above (page 228). Henry VII. ordered that a kneeling image of himself, covered with gold plates and enamelled, should be made and set up in the middle of the crest of the shrine.

PILGRIM'S SIGN : ST. EDWARD

It was a rich booty that Henry VIII. obtained from this invaluable shrine, the upper part of which was totally destroyed. The lower part of marble was left standing in a mutilated state, and the chest containing the relics of St. Edward was buried near by.

At the accession of Mary the ruins of the Confessor's shrine were repaired, though evidently by unskilled workmen—"the Shrine was again set up, and the Altar with divers jewels that the Queen sent hither."

"The xx day of Marche (1557) was taken up at Westminster again with a hondered lights, Kyng Edward the Confessor in the sam plasse wher ys shryne was, and ytt shalle be sett up agayne as fast as my Lord Abbot can have ytt done, for ytt was a godly shyte to have seen yt, how reverently he was cared from the plasse that he was taken up where he was laid when that the abbay was spowled and robyed; and so he was cared and goodly syngyng and senssyng as has been sene and Masse song."[1]

The shrine had again been set up by the 21st of April, and the chest of St. Edward placed in position.

The shrine of St. Edward stands on a base of one step, deeply worn by the knees of pilgrims, but this step having been relaid, these hollows are now on the inner instead of the outer edge. The substructure of marble, porphyry, and mosaic has three trefoiled niches on either side and one at the east end; they are separated only by thin tracery, which Peter the Roman filled with glass mosaic. Into these niches it was customary for pilgrims to ensconce themselves for the healing of their infirmities. Each niche is framed on the surface by a pattern in mosaic, that on the north differing from that on the south, the two patterns incongruously meeting on the east end. Above the arcade are a number of panels of serpentine and porphyry set in intricate mosaics and surmounted by an

[1] Machyn's *Diary*.

entablature, around the architrave of which ran the inscription in letters of blue glass recording the artist and the donor already mentioned. This was plastered over by Abbot Feckenham at the Marian restoration, but at the east end where the plaster has fallen away the words *Duxit in actum Romanus civis* can be deciphered. In place of this Feckenham had another inscription painted :—

> "Omnibus insignis laudum vertutibus heros,
> Sanctus Edwardus Confessor, rex venerandus,
> Quinto die Jani moriens super æthera scandit.
> Sursum Corda. Moritur anno Domini 1065."

(In all virtues worthy of praise a hero, St. Edward the Confessor, a king to be venerated, dying on the fifth day of January, ascended above the skies. Lift up your hearts! He died A.D. 1065.)

The cornice is considered to be the work of Feckenham, but a fragment of the original was found in 1868 built into the wall of the school, and has been restored.

At the west end a thick vertical slab of stone, originally covered with mosaic work, formed a reredos to the altar of the saint. This stone is now supported by two twisted shafts, but they are not in their original position. When Sir Gilbert Scott excavated at this spot he found the shafts to be the same length as the two at the easternmost corners of the shrine, those parts below the ground-level retained the tesseræ, while in those parts above-ground they had all been picked out; in order to show this he had them reversed. The two half-buried, twisted columns are larger in diameter than those at the east end; they may formerly have stood at either side of the tabulum, or reredos, and supported the architrave in a similar manner to those at the east; or they may have supported the golden figures of St. John and St. Edward

given by Edward II. in 1308, in the same positions as former figures occupied in the preceding shrine.

Nowhere else in England was such a combination of precious marbles and mosaic, or such forms of twisted columns of hollow spirals. In this monument are preserved to us the fruits of Abbot Ware's travels, the experience of the Roman workmen, and the influence of examples seen in St. John Lateran and St. Clement at Rome. It is an artistic union of Byzantine richness with English architectural forms.

The wooden canopy which would cover the inestimable riches of the feretory was quite destroyed and nothing remains to enlighten us as to its appearance. Yet in the unfinished Renaissance canopy of Feckenham it is probable we see the general character of that which was destroyed; only twenty years had passed since the desecration, and the recollection of the former covering must have been retained in the minds of many of the people. No doubt the abbot intended this to be finished with a gabled roof, while we know that it was decorated with gilding and colour to harmonise with the mosaics of the fixed shrine, for the remains are yet discernible.

This canopy was considerably damaged when the scaffolding was being removed after the coronation of James II., at which time the top of the iron-bound chest containing the relics of St. Edward was broken, making a hole about six inches long and four broad over the right breast of the saint's body.

A choirman of that time mounted a ladder and, putting his hand in the hole, turned the bones about; he drew the head down so that he could view it, and calmly tells us that it was very sound and firm, with the upper and nether jaws whole, and full of teeth, and a band of gold above an inch broad, in the nature of a coronet, surrounding the temples. He also drew out a richly adorned and enamelled

crucifix on a gold chain twenty-four inches long, which, after passing through various hands, was sold at a public auction in 1830 and is now entirely lost.

James II. stopped a recurrence of such sacrilege by ordering the chest to be enclosed within another of very great strength, each plank two inches thick, and bound together with strong ironwork.

Again has an altar been raised on the old site at the head of St. Edward's shrine, on which the sacred rites were performed in preparation for the coronation of King Edward the Seventh.

CHAPTER VI

SACRILEGE

FROM various episodes recorded in the foregoing pages it will be seen that the custodians of these costly shrines were not needlessly appointed. Priceless jewels, fastened by merely a wire on to a wire trellis-work, and many a golden ornament could easily be wrenched from its position by pilfering hands if a vigilant oversight were not kept, and covetousness in all ages disregarded things sacred equally with things secular. For the better preservation of these riches, watching-galleries were erected from which the Custos Feretri or one of the brethren could overlook the shrine. But few of these remain, yet they exceed in number those objects for which they were built. The chamber in St. Anselm's tower has lost its mission—no offerings to St. Thomas are left to guard. Others remain at Christ Church, Oxford, and at Westminster Abbey over the Islip chantry; but none are so complete as the beautiful gallery of wood which overlooks the shrine of St. Alban in the great abbey church of Hertfordshire.

The sad story of the destruction of England's shrines has been read piecemeal in the foregoing pages. Sad, not only on account of the sacrilege, but for the principles underlying such acts. If it had been for the conscientious prevention of certain abuses, as it pretended to be, that

violation of sanctuaries might possibly be partially condoned. Fanatics are usually irresponsible, trusting in no higher power than their own mental capacity, minds which have become distorted; but official documents prove that the vast sacrilege committed by Henry the Eighth, whether in the suppression of monasteries or the destruction of shrines, was for his personal and worldly gain. The monasteries yielding broad lands and large estates with rent rolls of enormous value, and the shrines producing that which could be easily turned into ready money. Marillac, the French ambassador, declared that Henry was so avaricious and covetous

"that all the wealth of the world would not be enough to satisfy and content his ambition . . . from which has come the ruin of the abbeys and the spoiling of every church in which there was anything to take . . . S. Thomas is declared a traitor because his relics and bones were adorned with gold and stones."[1]

And if many of the lands were bestowed on his subjects, it was yet for his own gain, for no greater influence could be exercised than lavish bestowal of gifts to make those subjects servile creatures, who, once enriched by these means, could have no power to withstand their prince's enormities. It may be an easy matter to blame them for their non-support of higher principles, but Mammon, combined with the imperious will of an unscrupulous sovereign, can only be resisted by an ideal Christian.

Doubtless the people looked to the archbishop as the most able to defend the Church, but it was no St. Thomas who now sat in St. Augustine's chair, and Cranmer was at greater fault than his king. As the spiritual head of the English hierarchy he betrayed his trust and cringed to the secular prince.

The instruments for the destruction of shrines, issued

[1] *Inventaire Analytique*, ed. Kaulet, p. 211.

in 1538, were local commissions under the Privy Seal, each one directed to two or more persons acting as visitors, and formally countersigned by the Lord Privy Seal—Thomas Cromwell. They dealt in words with the shrines and the treasures only, leaving the commissioners to deal with the relics at discretion. Athough no general orders for the destruction of shrines were issued until about the middle of the year (1538), instructions were given to the Duke of Norfolk as early as May, 1537, directing him to remove that of St. John at Bridlington. The letter runs :—

"As for the shrine, the king's highness, to the intent that his people should not be seduced in the offering of their money, would have it taken down."

The jewels and the plate were to be sent to London.[1]

The "Declaration of Faith," written by Thomas Derby, clerk of the Privy Council, corrected under instruction of the Council, and issued by royal authority in 1539 for preaching at Paul's Cross, is a public vindication of the late proceedings of the king, and in it is the following passage in justification of the destruction of shrines and reliquaries, making special mention of that of St. Thomas of Canterbury. That portion which it was thought inadvisable to make public had a pen run through, and is here placed within brackets.

"As for shrynes capses[2] and reliquaries of saints so called, although the most were nothing lesse, for as much as his highness had found other idolatry or detestable superstition used thereabouts and perceived that they were for the most part feyned things . . . his majestye therfore hath caused the same to be taken awaye and the abusyve pices therof to be brent, the doubtfull to be sett and hyden honestly away for feare of idolatry.

"As for the shryne of Thomas Becket, sometime Archbishop

[1] R.O. State Papers, Dom. 1537. [2] Coffers or chests.

of Canterbury . . . it was arrested that his shrynes and bones shuld be taken away and bestowed in suche place as the same shuld cause no superstition afterwards [as it is indede amongst others of that sorte conveyed and buryed in a noble tower]. And for as moche as his hedd almost hole was found with the rest of his bones closed within the shryne, and that ther was in that church a grete scull of another hede, but much gretter by the iij quarter parts than that part which was lacking in the hede closed within the shryne, wherby it appered that the same was but a feyned fiction, if this hede was brent was therefore S. Thomas brent? Assurydly it concludeth not S. Swythan and other reliques wheraboute abuse of ipocrasy was to be layde safe, and not, as it is untruely surmitted, brent, but according to reason collocate secretely, wher ther shal be no cause of superstition given by them, as some say that for the like cause the body of Moyses was hyden lest the Jues shuld fall to idolatry."

In 1541 Henry sent a letter to Archbishop Cranmer on this subject, who then sent his mandate to the other bishops:—

"Most reverend father in God, right trusty and right entirely well-beloved, we greet you well. Letting you wit, that whereas heretofore, upon the zeal and remembrance which we had to our bounden duty towards Almighty God, perceiving sundry superstitions and abuses to be used and embraced by our people, whereby they grievously offended him and his word, we did not only cause the images and bones of such as they resorted and offered unto, with the ornaments of the same, and all such writings and monuments of feigned miracles wherewith they were illuded, to be taken away in all places of our realm; but also by our injunctions commanded,[1] that no offering or setting of lights or candles should be suffered in any church, but only to the blessed sacrament of the altar: it is lately come to our knowledge that, this our good intent and purpose notwithstanding, the shrines, covering of shrines, and monuments of those

[1] *Injunctions made by Cromwell* 1538. Burnet, i. pt. ii., App. Bk. iii. No. ii. 279–284. Ed. Oxon. 1829.

things do yet remain in sundry places of our realm, much to the slander of our doings and to the great displeasure of Almighty God, the same being means to allure our subjects to their former hypocrisy and superstition, and also that our injunctions be not kept as appertaineth : for the due and speedy reformation whereof, we have thought meet by these our letters expressly to will and command you, that incontinently, upon the receipt hereof, you shall not only cause due search to be made in your cathedral churches for those things, and if any shrine, covering of shrine, table, monument of miracles, or other pilgrimage do there continue, to cause it to be taken away, so as there remain no memory of it ; but also that you shall take order with all the curates, and other, having charge within your diocese, to do the semblable, and to see that our injunctions be duly kept, as appertaineth, without failing, as we trust, and as you will answer for the contrary. Geven under our signet at our town of Hull, the 4th day of October, in the thirty-third year of our reign."

The king must have concluded that his subjects had very short memories, for, until his evil desires for his first divorce brought him into conflict with Rome, Henry VIII. had himself been a frequent pilgrim to shrines, and a continuous almsgiver to all those of primary repute.

In the Injunctions of King Edward VI., issued in 1547, the clergy are told, among other things,

"that they shall take away, utterly extinct, and destroy all shrines, covering of shrines, all tables (of relics), candlesticks, trindles or rolls of wax, pictures, paintings, and all other monuments of feigned miracles, pilgrimages, idolatry, and superstition ; so that there remain no memory of the same in walls, glass windows, or elsewhere, within their churches or houses,"

and in paragraph three it is ordered that all standing images were to be taken down and destroyed which had been "so abused with pilgrimages or offerings of anything made thereunto." Also the Act of Parliament 3 & 4 Edward VI. c. x. § 6, spared only recumbent

"images set upon a tomb only for a monument of any dead person who hath not been commonly reputed and taken as a saint."

So thoroughly were these repeated injunctions enforced that no shrine of the primary class was left standing except that of St. David in the remote corner of Wales. No single feretory escaped the ruthless spoiler's hand—for that was the object which received the costly gifts of the sons of the Church—except that of the Irish St. Manchán. Of the minor reliquaries only a small number escaped, and those through being but little known and of less value. Some few of the enamelled copper caskets are yet extant, but, with scarcely an exception, emptied of their sacred contents. Here and there, in a public museum or a private collection, is preserved one of these memorials of our forefathers' reverence, but no longer the memorial of the saint to whom it was dedicated; for the name of the beatified finds no place upon it, and the name inscribed on lead which it was usual to place within has been lost, along with the relics, leaving nothing by which it may be associated with any who find a place in the Calendar. Probably some few remain in the obscurity of cottage walls, like one described by the Rev. F. Bagot. In the *Archæological Journal* (x. 369) he tells us how in a cottage at Rodney Stoke, near Wells, he found a reliquary made of latten, the lid arched like the roof of a building, and surmounted by an elevated ridge. It measured $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, and $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height including the ridge. The surface is rudely engraved, and bears an inscription, of which the letters MAGNIF may be deciphered, and on the roof may be read CONFUN, which he surmises to be part of the phrase, "Non confundar in æternum." The enamels had been cleaned away by oft-repeated scouring, and it had long formed *one of the well-burnished ornaments of the chimney-shelf!*

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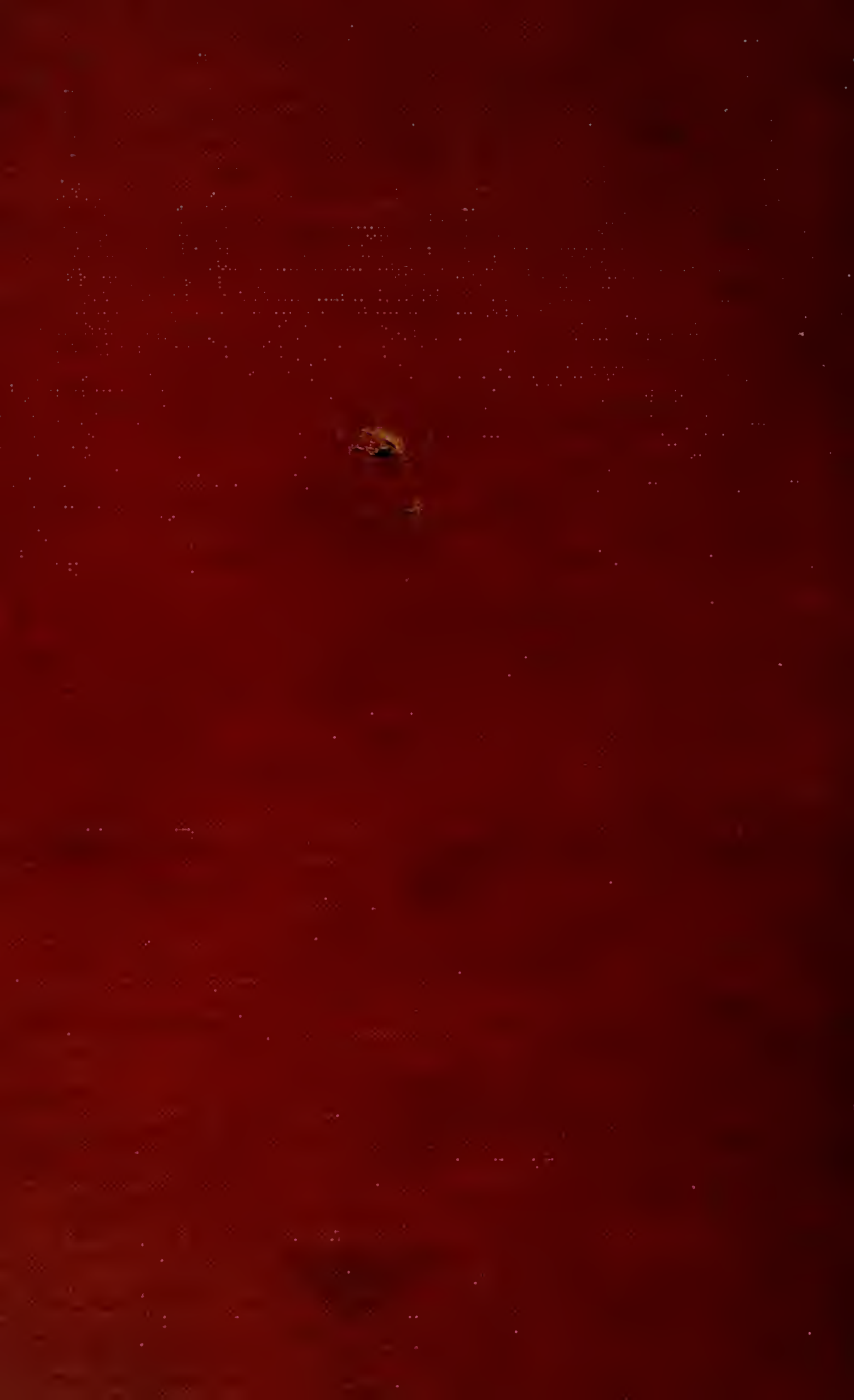
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